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Outside

buyer's guide

THE ULTIMATE GEAR RESOURCE

2016 Outside GEAR OF THE YEAR

WINTER 2015-2016

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2016

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EMPTY SLOPES,
AND REAL
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#TESTEDTOUGH



Outside buyer's guide

WINTER 2015-16

THE MA BOYLE EDITION

THE ULTIMATE GEAR RESOURCE

299 NEW WINTER PRODUCTS

+

**1 THAT IS
TESTED TOUGH**

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A hiker with a backpack is standing in tall, dry grass next to a calm lake. The hiker is wearing a plaid shirt, dark pants, and a blue beanie. The lake reflects the hiker and the surrounding landscape, which includes mountains and a cloudy sky. The text "ANSWER THE CALL" is overlaid on the image.

ANSWER THE CALL



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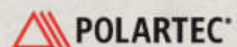
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INGA HENDRICKSON

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REI Stratocloud
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A little preparation and the right gear can turn almost any dog into a cold-weather adventure companion



For many people, summer, spring, and fall are literally the dog days. We take our loyal trail buddies everywhere: on bike rides and river trips, jogging, camping, hiking, and to the brewpub afterwards. Once the snow falls, however, there's a tendency to let sleeping dogs lie—on the couch, for months on end. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Running

Like humans, dogs need to take care of their feet when they run in winter. To keep them protected, before you head out apply Bag Balm or **Musher's Secret**, a natural wax that was developed for sled dogs

in Canada and lets the paws breathe and prevents snowballs from forming in between pads. After the run, thoroughly clean your dog's feet so she won't lick salt, anti-freeze, or any other potential toxins off her toes.

Skiing

Your dog has an instinct to stay as close to you as possible. Your skis have sharp metal edges. The two don't mix well. The best solution is to bone up on your voice commands and make sure your four-legged mountaineer has a strong heel. Command your pup to keep a good distance behind you while going up and down the hill. And just in case something does go wrong, it's best to be prepared and carry a first-aid kit.

Winter Camping

For short-haired breeds, a jacket is a must. Even dogs with thicker coats can benefit from the added warmth. One of the best investments

Get your dog winter-ready with Merrick Backcountry, an ancestral canine diet made with protein-rich grain-free kibble plus whole pieces of raw, freeze-dried meat. For more info, visit merrickpetcare.com/backcountry



is a lightweight, insulated, and water-resistant dog bed, like **Ruffwear's Highlands Bed** (\$60, ruffwear.com), which lets them take a break on the trail without having to lie in the snow. Backpacks, booties, and even

doggie sleeping bags can also be a plus. Even with the proper gear, stop periodically to check for signs of frostbite (hard, discolored skin) on the nose, ears, pads and toes, and tip of the tail.

Skijoring

For the ultimate winter bonding experience, teach your dog skijoring, or pulling you on skis. In theory, any dog over 30 pounds can do it. Buy a proper skijoring harness, like **Ruffwear's Omnijore Joring system** (\$175), and make sure that it doesn't constrict your dog's movements, a problem that can cause injury. It's best to practice first in warm weather, using a scooter, rollerblades, or a bike. Once you get on snow, start with slow, short runs and work your way up until your dog is properly conditioned.

THE BASICS

Paws: There are a few preparations that every pet parent needs to make before taking his pup into the snow. Step one is taking care of your companion's feet. The biggest problem for most dogs is snow and ice buildup between their toes and pads. Add to that a little road salt, and pads begin to develop painful abrasions. It's best to keep the fur between their toes trimmed down so it doesn't collect snow and ice. Booties are also a great option if your dog can tolerate them.

Food: Pet parents may also need to increase the amount of food at mealtimes since spending hours in the cold burns a lot of calories. Each dog is different, but for most active pooches, 10 to 25% more high-quality, high-protein dog food, like Merrick's Backcountry Game Bird Recipe Dog Food, should be just about right.



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THE WORLD'S FINEST ALPINE EQUIPMENT
REIMAGINED

THE NORTH FACE.COM/SUMMIT

PHOTO BY TIM KEMPLE, LANGTANG, NEPAL

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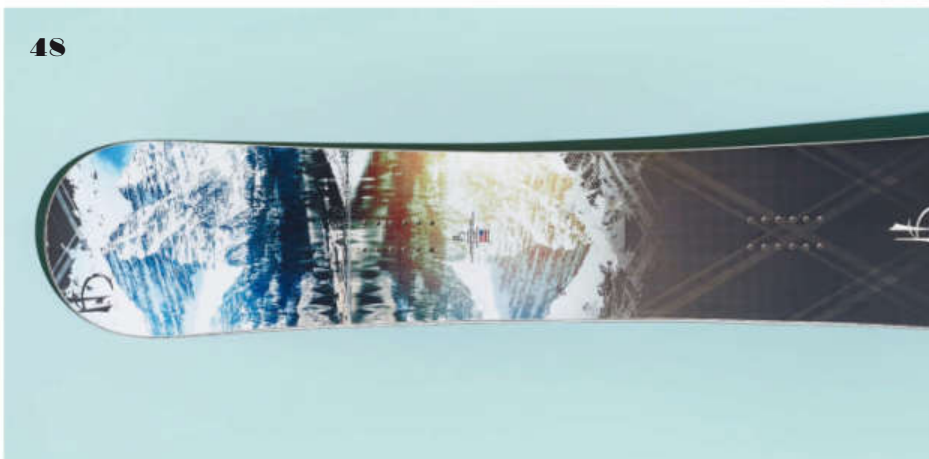
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holy\$#*!fit



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EDITOR'S LETTER

SOMETHING NEW

I've been skiing since I was two, but growing up in Vail, Colorado, I spent 95 percent of my time making turns in-bounds. As I got older, I'd take the occasional hut trip on tele skis, but I never was very good at freeing the heel. Once a season, I'd spot someone on alpine-touring gear and wonder how they'd gotten into the expensive, intimidating sport.

How differently things would have been for me had I been born in, say, 2010. After several years of rapid development in AT gear, touring has gotten so popular that Vail grooms now learn to French-fry on skis designed as much for the ups as the downs. The stuff remains expensive, but you get a heck of a lot for your money. Mount the Marker Kingpin binding (page 103) on the Gear of the Year-winning backcountry ski from Black Crows (page 101) and you have an exceptionally versatile setup.

The AT revolution is driving innovation throughout the industry. Outerwear makers are engineering backcountry shells (page 108) designed to be worn all day. And avalanche airbags (page 119) are getting simpler and smarter; for the first time, we reviewed them alongside standard packs for our Gear of the Year award.

I didn't own my first AT setup until last season. After two months and a handful of shorter forays, I joined some friends for a tour of Heaven's Hill, a 1,000-foot-long run just past the local ski area here in Santa Fe. After two hours, we reached the summit, then carved lines through three feet of fresh back to the lot. It was the best powder day of my life. It was also a reminder of how important gear is to our playtime and why, for many of us, it's the most valuable investment we make. —AXIE NAVAS (@axie2020)



MY ADVENTURE
COMPANION
is always stoked.



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Our new expanded digital edition makes it even easier to find the gear you need. outsideonline.com/wbg

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Individual shots of every single ski, jacket, helmet, and boot in the issue.

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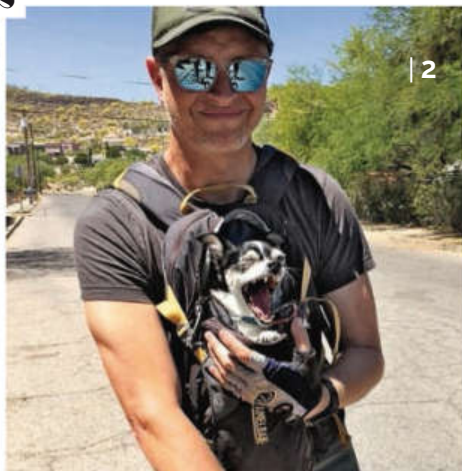
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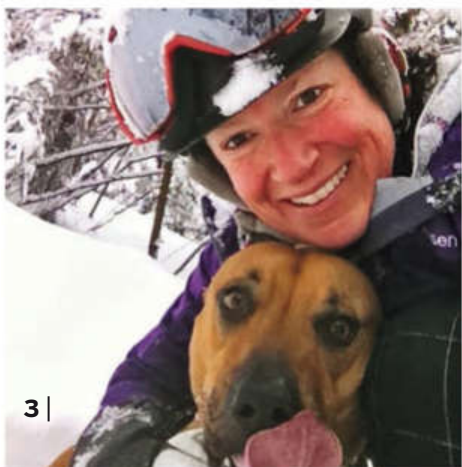
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1. GRAYSON SCHAFFER
Contributing editor
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
enjoys the view at the Opus hut in the San Juan Mountains of southern Colorado.

2. WILL PALMER
Watches, Tech Tools
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
gets scared of fuzzy barrel cactuses.



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3. BERNE BROUDY
Winter Hikers, Snowshoes
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
skis the East and loves the trees.

4. MICHAEL ROBERTS
Executive editor
MY ADVENTURE COMPANIONS
are occasionally permitted off-leash.



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5. ADAM BRODERICK
Snowboards
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
romps rowdily through Adventure Town.

6. RYAN STUART
Packs
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
doesn't understand why I need breaks.



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7. MEAGHEN BROWN
Associate editor
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
plows through powder like a brown dolphin.

8. TYLER COHEN
Backcountry Skis and Bindings, Alpine Touring Ski Boots
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
gets neck deep in northern Vermont's snowy backcountry.

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BETWEEN THE LINES



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9. JULIA AMIRZADOV
Art director
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
is plagued by snow dingleberries.



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10. JON GUGALA
Assistant managing editor
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
hates car trips; enjoys naps, tuna.



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11. FREDERICK REIMERS
Resort Jackets, Backcountry Jackets
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
loves tele skiers.



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12. MICHAEL FRANK
Cameras, Fitness Trackers, Running Tech
MY ADVENTURE COMPANION
always sticks the landing.



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GRAB AND GO

Do-it-all skis make resort days simpler—and more fun
BY MARC PERUZZI

In the gear world, the word *versatile* is supposed to connote “deft” and “multi-talented.” It’s overused to the point of cliché, but it’s also a totally accurate description of the new all-mountain skis. Finally, after decades of R&D, you can buy one pair of boards—not too fat, not too skinny, not too carvy, not too buttery—to replace a garageful of overly specialized confusion. In fact, the options are so adroit, we had to rethink our Snowbird, Utah, test. When a powder ski can rip a beautiful GS turn, it’s no longer just a powder ski. So, too, with a frontside ski that shralps a breakfast of hardpack and floats through the afternoon dump. Thus the simple premise behind what follows: buy the width you need for your favorite (or most commonly encountered) conditions. Then embrace your newfound versatility and go ski everything on the hill.

GEAR OF THE YEAR

Kastle FX95 HP \$1,199

Two sheets of aluminium, a silver fir core, and the fastest graphite base that money can buy are staples of this premium brand. In the new FX95 HP, Kastle designers overhauled the ski’s camber and profile, pairing a tapered tip and tail with just the right amount of rocker for a surfy feel in soft snow without sacrificing edge hold on hardpack. Result: the most adaptable all-mountain ski here. At 95 millimeters underfoot, it’s wide enough for most powder days, but with some traditional camber and the aforementioned Kastle engine under the hood, you can also rail groomer turns. 126/95/115; kastle-ski.com
OVERALL: 5 / CARVING: 5 [OUT OF 5]





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#TESTEDTOUGH



 **Columbia**

All Mountain

1. Völkl

Mantra \$875

BEST FOR: Hunting leftover powder.

THE TEST: This is the only all-mountain ski here with full rocker—no traditional camber underfoot. The damp wood-core ski blasts through boot-deep powder and sun-cooked mank when opened up in big bowls. Not that it's a slouch on groomers. Ski it balanced and the rocker engages the edges for an unctuous midsize arc.

THE VERDICT:

If you were afraid of Völkl's race breeding, get over it. The Mantra is now easy and fun. 132/100/118; volkl.com
OVERALL: 4.5
CARVING: 4.5

2. Atomic Vantage

100 CTI \$850

BEST FOR: Doing it all—for \$350 less.

THE TEST: We didn't think the Vantage line could get much better. Boy, were we wrong. By building a super-rigid woven-carbon mesh into the new Vantage 100, Atomic reduced weight without giving up the silky feel at speed on hard snow. Thicker side-walls make for enhanced edge hold, while a titanium spine running above the cambered zones boosts stability even more. It's fluid, fun, and easy. Push it on morning ice and it inspires even more confidence.

THE VERDICT: In all likelihood, you'll run the do-it-all Vantage almost every day next season. 139.5/100/126.5; atomic.com
OVERALL: 4.5
CARVING: 4.5

3. Blizzard

Bonafide \$840

BEST FOR: Going wicked fast.

THE TEST: Lots of ski companies are removing weight from the tip and tail to reduce flutter and boost playfulness. Nowhere is the effect more noticeable than on the new Bonafide, with carbon in the front and back. The lower swing weight means the ski pivots in powder and crud, but there's still ample punch in the belly of the turn for charging on ice.

THE VERDICT: This is still a Blizzard—there's no speed limit. But it's also very accessible. 133/98/118; blizzard.com
OVERALL: 4.5
CARVING: 5

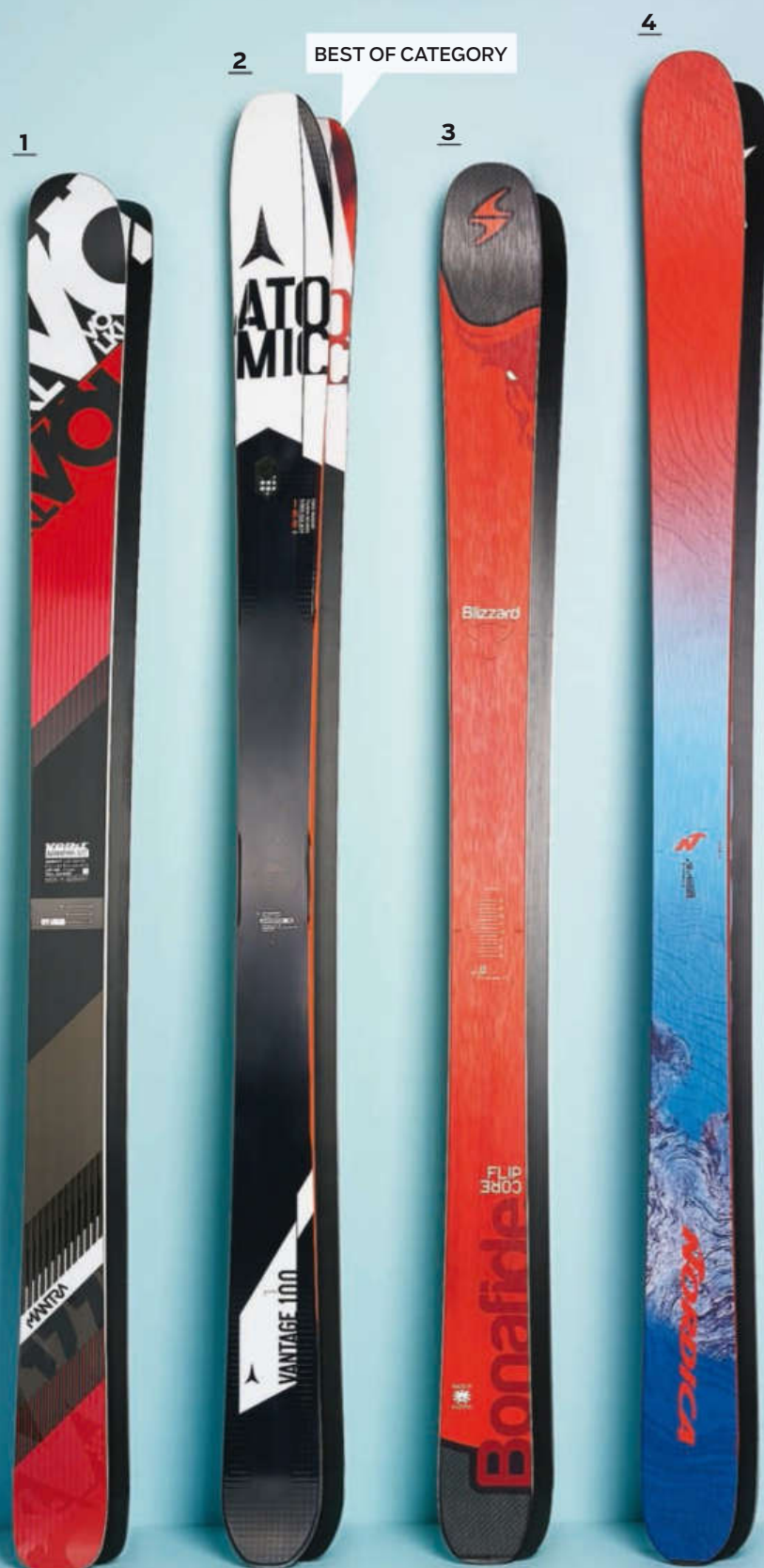
4. Nordica

Enforcer \$799

BEST FOR: Surfing—with guts.

THE TEST: There are two sheets of metal and a wood core inside the brand-new Enforcer, but it's not a pure carver. Rocker extends 25 percent down the ski from the tip (and 5 percent up from the tail), and it's got a big 60.7-foot turning radius worthy of a powder ski. We praised it for thunking around in day-old powder and straightlining runouts. But while it excels off-trail, it's the least groomer-friendly ski here; you need to drop the hip and ski the tail with plenty of pressure to get a nice round arc.

THE VERDICT: Ski fast and avoid tight glades. 133/100/121; nordicausa.com
OVERALL: 4
CARVING: 4



CARVING THE FRESH MESH

Since the 1960s, high-quality skis have been made the same way, with vertical laminates of wood glued together and sandwiched between metal to dampen vibration and add stability. But metal's heavy. So engineers looking to shed pounds have begun using carbon blends instead, opening the weave to create a loose mesh. Result: many of the best skis we tested have no metal at all other than at the edges. —M.P.

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All but two skis in our test **mix rocker and camber**. The idea: rocker floats the ski and eases turn initiation and exit, while camber boosts glide and edging.

5. Salomon

Q-Lab \$900

BEST FOR: Flat-out charging.

THE TEST: Most Salomon skis fall on the user-friendly end of the spectrum. But the Quest line brings the heat. Our testers favored them for going all-out in chutes and sunny, wide-open bowls. Even the 103-millimeter-wide version has superb directional stability. But that doesn't mean you're limited to skiing 40 miles per hour all the time, courtesy of a honeycomb insert in the tip to keep swing weight manageable.

THE VERDICT: If you spend a lot of time off-trail but don't need a massive powder ski to have fun, this is your best bet. 138/104/127; salomon.com
OVERALL: 4.5
CARVING: 4.5

6. Dynastar

Powertrack 89

\$750

BEST FOR: Varied terrain.

THE TEST: When a designer finds the correct balance of rocker (upturn at tip and tail) and taper (subtle narrowing of the rockered sections), it's possible to reduce width without sacrificing much float. That's what happened with the Powertrack 89, which skis loose, surfy, and fun off-trail but easily powers up when it bites an edge into icy hardpack.

THE VERDICT: If your local hill offers plenty of steep, mixed terrain, these planks were made for you. 126/89/110; dynastar.com
OVERALL: 4.5
CARVING: 5

7. Fischer

Ranger 98 Ti \$750

BEST FOR: Hiking for fresh turns.

THE TEST: Until now, lightweight skis have been a bit of a liability. Rail them at speed and they'd deflect nervously off frozen chunks. It's hard to shed ounces without sacrificing dampness and stability. The Ranger 98 changes that. A newly designed carbon nose built specifically for the Ranger line reduces swing weight, but classic wood and metal construction from the tip back keeps it powerful on tricky glazed snow.

THE VERDICT: The most promising in-bounds-to-out-of-bounds choice. 132/98/122; fischer sports.com
OVERALL: 4.5
CARVING: 3.5

8. Rossignol

Experience 100 Ti \$850

BEST FOR: Strong skiers who know how to finish a turn.

THE TEST: A few years ago, any board with this much raw power would have smacked you upside the head for every small high-speed miscalculation. Not so the Experience 100, which is both as smooth as a mushy rockered ski and as damp as a big-mountain charger. Thanks go to the honeycomb in the nose that cuts swing weight and the rocker that floats the tip.

THE VERDICT: If you already have a powder ski, get the Experience 100 for the rest of the season. 140/100/130; rossignol.com
OVERALL: 4.5
CARVING: 4.5

BEST OF CATEGORY

1



2



3 **KILLER VALUE**



4



1. Völkl Kendo \$825

BEST FOR: Supreme versatility.

THE TEST: The old Kendo was a fall-line machine that excelled at linking arcs on groomers, with occasional off-piste forays. The new Kendo—with tip and tail rocker and some subtle tapering—is all that, just with more off-trail chops. Like its older sibling, it uses wood and metal, but the new shape makes turn initiation far easier, despite the added width. The camber underfoot improves edge hold.

THE VERDICT: If the Brahma is a damp, stable all-arounder, the Kendo is its lighter, more playful relative. 127/90/110; volkl.com
OVERALL: 5
CARVING: 4.5

2. Atomic Vantage 90 CTI \$725

BEST FOR: Western groomers.

THE TEST: This ski feels silky and practically begs to contour the fall line—no excess muscle required. We credit the superb ride to Atomic's Carbon Tank Mesh construction, an open-weave fiber that replaces much of the ski's metal. We loved the 90 on- and off-trail, but it especially shone on smooth groomers.

THE VERDICT: This Vantage can handle more off-trail skiing than you might expect. "You just want to make turns on groomers and bounce around in the trees all day," one tester said. 133.5/90/117; atomic.com
OVERALL: 4.5
CARVING: 4.5

3. Dynastar Powertrack 84 \$600

BEST FOR: Short-swing turns in the fall line.

THE TEST: We expected the Powertrack to be nimble on groomers. What surprised us was how easily it handled bumps, chalky snow in the trees, and tight chutes. The secret? The five-point side-cut, with a tapered tip for easy turn initiation and an hourglass silhouette to lock you into the belly of the carving arc. Because the tail is also tapered, you can change direction at will.

THE VERDICT: You'll carve rounder turns than the ski-school automatons, then drop them easily off-trail. 123/84/106; dynastar.com
OVERALL: 4.5
CARVING: 4.5

4. Blizzard Brahma \$780

BEST FOR: Corduroy, glades, and bumps.

THE TEST: The skis on this page need to be stable yet dynamic on edge but still nimble enough for off-trail adventures. The Brahma sets the new standard here. World Cup-quality innards (poplar, beech, and aluminum) and a 62-foot turn radius mean you can arc through GS gates. But the mix of rocker and camber makes it equally adept off-trail.

THE VERDICT: Western skiers will want a powder ski to back it up, but it sure is versatile. 125/88/110; blizzard sportusa.com
OVERALL: 5
CARVING: 5

GERT BOYLE

Columbia Sportswear's Chairman, Oregon's unofficial First Lady and original Tough Mother cuts through the bull.

"If you can't take the heat on this page, turn it."

What's your motto? It's perfect. Now make it better.

Why are your products built tough? Because staying inside is not an option. **How do you know when a jacket is ready?**

When our beta tester isn't filing for workers' comp. **When would**

you use an umbrella? When I'm all out of kindling. **What do you do**

on your days off? Come in to work. **Favorite weather?** Fifty shades of gray skies. **Is there any**

weather you haven't made gear for? Is a black hole weather? **What's the first thing you say to**

a new employee? Take a hike. **Do you have any good jokes?** None that you can print. **Why not**

retire to Florida? Because the weather sucks there.



Heatzone 1000 TurboDown

TurboDown Wave baffle construction eliminates cold spots. Omni-Heat Reflective keeps your body heat working for you.

MA BOYLE SAYS: "This makes your current down jacket feel like a sad slice of Swiss cheese. It's a kidney punch to Old Man Winter. Tougher than a Hells Angel and warmer than a wood-fired pizza oven."

Minx Boot

Omni-Heat Reflective lining in a stylish waterproof exterior.

MA BOYLE SAYS: "These fierce boots can start cat fights or end mountain lion attacks. Warm enough to keep frostbite far, far away while melting the iciest jealous glares."



BEST OF CATEGORY



END GAMES

A few years ago, Rossignol and Salomon put tip and tail honeycomb inserts into their fat skis to create a lighter, more playful ride. Now manufacturers like Blizzard and Fischer are taking a new approach, with structural-carbon tips and tails. The carbon buys you up to a **20 percent reduction in swing weight** for a looser feel in soft snow. —M.P.

1. Rossignol**Soul 7** \$850**BEST FOR:** Having buckets of fun.

THE TEST: For many skiers, this is still the best blend of relaxed playfulness and high-speed stability on the market. The rest of the industry is scrambling to match what Rossi achieved with its weight-reducing honeycomb tips, well-designed taper (the ski enters and exits turns effortlessly), and relatively long effective edge for immense carving pleasure.

THE VERDICT:

Probably the best tool for skiing steep trees ever invented. 136/106/126; rossignol.com
OVERALL: 5
FLOAT: 4

2. Fischer Ranger**108 TI** \$850**BEST FOR:** Light-weight skiers tired of pushing hefty planks around.

THE TEST: A carbon nose paired with Fischer's proprietary milled-out Air Tec body delivers a core about 25 percent lighter than those in its competitors' skis. That weight savings and the rocker let us whip around trees and slice through powder. But the 108 is no noodle. Wood and titanium keep the ride smooth, while camber underfoot generates good energy return for a ski this fat.

THE VERDICT: Light enough for the backcountry, the 108 is best suited to skiers who weigh less than 160 pounds. 140/108/130; fischer sports.com
OVERALL: 5
FLOAT: 4.5

3. Völkl**100Eight** \$825**BEST FOR:** Traveling light to Utah or Whistler.

THE TEST: At 108 millimeters wide, with both rocker and tip taper, this ski is buoyant enough for all but the deepest days. The flat tail lets you engage the edges through the end of the turn. And a keen construction technique saves weight without sacrificing ride quality. Our testers called it "light," "playful," and "ridiculously powerful."

THE VERDICT: You could ski nothing but western groomers on the 100Eight and be perfectly happy. 141/108/124; volkl.com
OVERALL: 5
FLOAT: 4.5

4. Blizzard**Cochise** \$900**BEST FOR:** Smearing and carving.

THE TEST: Waist width matters more than any other ski attribute. Ride mostly hardpack? An 80-to-90-millimeter waist is best. Primarily go off-trail and chase storms? You'll want a 108-millimeter paddle like the playful Cochise. This ski has ample rocker for sloughing around in deep snow—minus the tip chatter when you hit chunder. But with a wood core backed by two sheets of Titanal, you can also carve.

THE VERDICT: Way more surfy and easier to ski than its predecessor—without sacrificing any power in crud. 136/108/122; blizzard sportusa.com
OVERALL: 5
FLOAT: 4.5



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FORM
FIT

PERFECT FIT



HEAD®

5



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7



8

**5. Dynastar Cham 2.0 107** \$800**BEST FOR:** Strong skiers who go fast.**THE TEST:** Like a downhill mountain bike, the old Cham started working properly only above 45 miles per hour. Not so the Cham 2.0, which has well-balanced flex. We fell into the ski's sweet spot, smearing and buttering at a range of speeds. But unlike most of the skis here, it offers great high-end energy return and stability when you open up the throttle.**THE VERDICT:** The ski we'd grab if we had to outrun an avalanche. But we'd happily deploy it in six inches of fresh, too. 137/107/122; dynastar.com
OVERALL: 5
FLOAT: 5**6. Salomon Q-105** \$725**BEST FOR:** Skiing pure powder.**THE TEST:** The Q-105 is the skinniest ski here, but it's also the most buoyant. That's testament to how the right mix of rocker, camber, tip taper, and weight savings can outperform straight-up girth. It was easy to pivot and smear in trees but was still up for point and shoot: there's ample directional stability for going fast in open country. Note: it does get a bit squirrely on icy groomers.**THE VERDICT:** "A superlight, crazy nimble ski that floats effortlessly," said one tester. 136/105/128; salomon.com
OVERALL: 4.5
FLOAT: 5**7. Nordica NRGy 107** \$849**BEST FOR:** Railing carved turns between dumps.**THE TEST:** The NRGy 107 was the best ski of this group on groomers, with a sheet of titanium alloy that added pop without weight. A flat tail lets you power through the end of the turn. And the poplar core and ample tip rocker give you just enough float to blast over boot-deep snow.**THE VERDICT:** On a powder day, are you more likely to (A) squirrel around in the trees for the last scraps, or (B) haul down the middle of the run? If (B), you've found your ski. 137/107/125; nordicausa.com
OVERALL: 4
FLOAT: 4**8. Atomic Automatic 109** \$725**BEST FOR:** High-speed pow turns.**THE TEST:** This is consistently one of the best western skis we test. To save weight, Atomic went with a poplar core (instead of heavy ash or fir) backed by carbon "power boosters." Rocker extends 25 percent of the way down the shovel of the ski. But there's real camber underfoot. That meant we could push the 109 to top speed in 17 inches of fresh but still rail it up on edge. Lightweights should downsize, as this is a beefy, powerful ride.**THE VERDICT:** The fattest plank here (barely), it's the best option for off-trail skiing. 134/109/124; atomic.com
OVERALL: 5
FLOAT: 4.5



PLAY WITH POWER

ALLSPEED, featuring an **all-new** fully-customizable and streamlined design, offers the essential boot-fitting elements to ensure optimized comfort and performance for every foot shape. Power, precision, comfort, control - everything begins in the foot.

ANOTHER **BEST** DAY

ROSSIGNOL

1 |



| 2



PURE POWDER

1. Salomon MTN Lab \$950**BEST FOR:** Face shots.

THE TEST: Let's assume you own an all-mountain ripper but live to chase winter storms. You need a ski like the MTN Lab in your quiver. Salomon paired a honey-comb tip with a new material called CFX Superfiber—a carbon and flax weave that adds power and dampening sans metal—to shed weight. At Snowbird, in the most intense storm many of us had ever witnessed, the MTN Lab stood apart for ease of use and undying stability. You can throw it around in a low-speed slough turn or ski at highway speeds and expend very little energy.

THE VERDICT: You'd never need more float. And somehow it skis with gusto on hardpack, too.

141/115/129;

salomon.com

OVERALL: 5

FIRM-SNOW

SURVIVAL: 4

PURE FRONTSIDE

2. Head iSupershape Titan with PRX 12 bindings \$1,075**BEST FOR:** Short to medium swing turns on everything from ice to butter.

THE TEST: At first glance, this Head looks like a beer-league race ski—complete with a sandwich-style World Cup wood core and two sheets of metal. But it's also 80 millimeters underfoot (for a stable platform), and 10 percent of the tip is rockered (for easing into turns). Our testers raved about how they could mindlessly lock into a medium-radius turn. "Patience is rewarded with a powerful finish," said one. It's glossy smooth at all speeds and forgives small mistakes.

THE VERDICT:

For the days when you want to have maximum fun on hot groomer laps.

133/80/111;

head.com

OVERALL: 5

STABILITY: 5



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EXCLUSIVE LODGING DEALS

\$99 KID PASS

Field Tested: ALPINE SKI BOOTS

| 1



| 2



IF THE SHOE FITS

Flex, lasts, and liners matter. But above all, buy the one that feels good. **BY ERIC HATCH**

BEST FOR: Freeskiers

1. Head Vector Evo 130 \$800

The old Vector was a nice racing boot. This year, Head perfected the family by making the new Evo 130 even more performance oriented, with a forward lean that encourages an upright stance, a relatively steep ramp angle, and a narrower last. head.com

BEST FOR: Dialing In Fit

2. Dalbello Avanti 100 \$550

Not too soft but not too stiff, the 100-flex Avanti is the Goldilocks of the ski-boot world. Its Italian designers gave it a nearly bespoke fit with a heat-moldable liner, which can be custom-formed to your foot in five minutes flat. dalbello.it

BEST FOR: Skiing Corduroy

3. Nordica Cruise 110 \$499

This was the most comfortable boot we tested, with a superwide toe box and heel pocket, 104-millimeter last, and cozy liner. It's ideal for mellow cruisers who want to arc down groomers or navigate through frontside bumps. nordicausa.com

BEST FOR: Racers

4. Lange RS 130 \$850

The RS 130 borrows fit technology from Lange's World Cup boots, with a 97-millimeter last that provides maximum control when laying down GS turns. The new liners improve circulation and warmth, while the updated buckles are easy to adjust even with mittens on. Pair 'em with stiff skis and an aggressive attitude. langeboots.com

BEST FOR: Wide Feet

5. Salomon X Pro 120 \$725

If your ideal day involves nailing slalom turns and charging through crud, the X Pro will have you whooping with joy. A tight heel pocket gives way to a relatively roomy 100-millimeter last that allows for good power transfer in tricky conditions. Intermediate and advanced skiers with big flippers, take note. salomon.com

BEST FOR: Climbing in Comfort

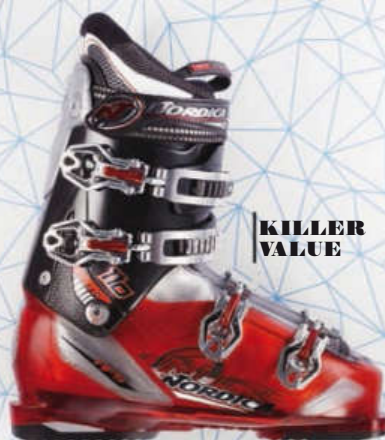
6. K2 Skis Pinnacle 110 HV \$750

The Pinnacle 110 has the same features—superb walk mode, meaty rubber lugs, built-in tech fittings—that make its big brother, the 130, a great AT boot. But with softer flex, it'll play nicer with light powder boards and chill skiers. Ideal for the occasional backcountry foray. k2skis.com

BE FLEXIBLE

The numbers after model names denote how difficult it is to bend the boot forward. Rule of thumb: aggressive skiers need a flex between 110 and 130, while beginners should stick with 80 or 90.

| 3



**KILLER
VALUE**

| 4



| 5



| 6





SIZE
7-16



KEEP WARM

BOGS ULTRA MID



COMPLETE PROTECTION AGAINST THE ELEMENTS

100% WATERPROOF • SOLE SURVIVAL

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-40°C



COOL
COLD
FRIGID

**ELEMENTAL PROTECTION**

Stay warmer, drier, and happier on the slopes

BY FREDERICK REIMERS

Ski jackets have long benefited from trickle-down technology: the features developed for serious backcountry shells (page 108) work just as well when you're huddled on a wet chairlift. This year there are more excellent options than ever. To whittle our initial list down to these seven, we spent a season skiing both sides of the ropes in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. We tried jackets with everything from an aerogel fill, developed by NASA and said to be the best insulator ever made, to a new design that features overlapping down baffles. The difference between enjoying a powder day and warming up in the lodge often comes down to what you're wearing—it's worth investing in quality outerwear.

GEAR OF THE YEAR

Arc'teryx Rethel \$475

The supple Rethel is hands-down the most comfortable ski jacket we've ever tested.

Imagine your favorite sweatshirt, but built to shred. A soft shell with synthetic insulation in the torso and arms plus stretchy fabric along the sides, it offers fantastic mobility and a stellar warmth-to-weight ratio. Arc'teryx kept the design blessedly simple by slimming down the powder skirt and putting diagonal vents over the ribs, which cool remarkably well for their size.

1.3 lbs; arcteryx.com

VERSATILITY: 5

DURABILITY: 4

[OUT OF 5]

HELLY HANSEN CATWALK



Mercer CIS Coat

BE READY FOR ANY WEATHER IN OUR 3-IN-1 JACKETS

The 3-in-1 system gives you the versatility you need, so you can enjoy the outdoors in any weather. Scandinavian Design is the cornerstone in all Helly Hansen gear. The optimal combination of purposeful design, protection and style – this is why professional sailors, mountain guides and discerning enthusiasts choose Helly Hansen.

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CONFIDENT WHEN IT MATTERS

JACKETS

1. Marmot Storm King \$550

BEST FOR: Spring slush.

THE TEST: Soft shells used to be restricted to mild days on the hill; they were comfortable and breathable, but they wouldn't keep you dry. The Storm King can handle it all. Marmot embedded a Polartec NeoShell layer into the thick, fleece-lined fabric and taped the seams, making the jacket almost as waterproof as a traditional hard shell while offering much better breathability. The massive hood covered large helmets on blustery chairlift rides. Tip: zip off the powder skirt to shave a few ounces.

THE VERDICT: An overachieving soft shell. 2.2 lbs; marmot.com

VERSATILITY: 5 / DURABILITY: 4

2. Under Armour Nimbus \$599

BEST FOR: Rippers who run hot.

THE TEST: The Nimbus ditches standard pit zips in favor of 14-inch-long mesh-backed vents on the chest. Open them up when you're skiing and it's like having an air conditioner blowing right at your core. There's also an ingenious zipper at the base of the collar that expands the hood to accommodate a wide range of large helmets. Pair those nifty features with bomber three-layer Gore-Tex Pro fabric and you have an exceptionally durable waterproof-breathable shell.

THE VERDICT: Equal parts clever and tough. 1.9 lbs; underarmour.com

VERSATILITY: 4 / DURABILITY: 5

3. Black Diamond Mission \$599

BEST FOR: Skiing in a blizzard.

THE TEST: The Mission is built for the worst days on the mountain, with burly 70-denier nylon face fabric, a one-inch-long drop hem, and a massive helmet-compatible hood. Testers appreciated the 18-inch-long pit zips, which dumped heat in a hurry huffing up Jackson's sidecountry boot-packs. The Mission happily does double-duty as a backcountry shell, with large internal mesh pockets that fit climbing skins for even the fattest planks.

THE VERDICT: Everything an expert needs, including seven pockets.

1.7 lbs; blackdiamondequipment.com
VERSATILITY: 5 / DURABILITY: 4

LAYER UP

New technologies and design innovations have erased many of the differences between hard shells and soft shells, but one important distinction remains: **what you wear under them.** Uninsulated hard shells like the Black Diamond and Under Armour are cut loose to allow room for base and midlayers. The stretchy, slightly heavier soft-shell fabrics used on the Marmot and Helly Hansen (page 46) afford a snugger, warmer fit without compromising mobility and are intended to be worn over less.

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| 3



The Mission's powder skirt sits lower than on most shells. **Less overlapping fabric** at the waist means more breathability.



Feel the Performance™

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THE ONLY CONDITIONS THAT MATTER THIS SKI SEASON ARE THE ONES ON THE GROUND
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NEITHER PRECIPITATION NOR PERSPIRATION WILL TAKE AWAY FROM YOUR TIME ON THE SLOPES.

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JACKETS

4. Faction Darwin Aerogel \$569

BEST FOR: Early adopters.

THE TEST: Faction filled the Darwin with a NASA-designed insulation called aerogel, developed to keep astronauts warm and comfortable in space. The ultralight, porous material is limited to just six of the jacket's panels, but in testing we found it to be much warmer than a standard shell and just as waterproof. The Darwin earns bonus points for its soft, stretchy face fabric, supple wrist cuffs with thumb holes, and seven huge pockets designed to hold all the essentials.

THE VERDICT: High-tech armor for chilly days. 1.9 lbs; factionskis.com

VERSATILITY: 4 / DURABILITY: 4

5. Helly Hansen Alpha 2.0 \$500

BEST FOR: Cruising groomers.

THE TEST: If your ski day revolves around ripping down blue runs and hunting for fresh corduroy, this is your jacket. With plump PrimaLoft insulation wrapped in a soft, stretchy, waterproof exterior fabric and trimmed with a cozy fleece-lined collar, it's as plush a coat as you'll find on the slopes. Bells and whistles for resort skiing include a tethered goggle wipe, a slick cable port for headphones, and a zip-off hood. The only downside to all this luxury? You end up with a heavier rig.

THE VERDICT: The ultimate deluxe downhill. 2.6 lbs; hellyhansen.com

VERSATILITY: 3 / DURABILITY: 3

6. Columbia Heatzone 1000

TurboDown \$450

BEST FOR: Surviving a night on the ski lift.

THE TEST: Most down parkas have cold spots at the seams where the baffles are stitched together. Not the Heatzone 1000, which stacks a second overlapping layer of fill above the first to eliminate the lines where heat can escape. The result: arguably the warmest ski jacket for its weight ever made. The 900-fill feathers, fortified by a thin outer layer of synthetic insulation, maintain their loft in the slop, while thicker fabric on the shoulders adds durability.

THE VERDICT: The toastiest jacket here. 1.4 lbs; columbia.com

VERSATILITY: 3 / DURABILITY: 3

4

Helly Hansen's H2Flow system insulates by **trapping pockets of body heat**. When things get too warm, open the chest vents to channel cool air in.

5

6



marmot.com



**WHAT
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YOU
LIFE?**

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Marmot[®]
FOR LIFE

PROTECTION IN ALL CONDITIONS

Photo: Gabe Rogel Athlete: Brenton Reagan



RIDE AT WILL

The best new models are built to handle it all

BY ADAM BRODERICK

Our 45-member test team spent a week riding 94 new snowboards in Crested Butte, Colorado, last March, shredding from dawn till dusk until our legs could take no more. The first few days on hardpack and a choppy mix of ice and snow taught us a lot about how the boards performed in dicey conditions. Then the storm gods dropped a foot of fresh powder. What we learned: today's top boards are as capable banging through bumps below the lift as they are floating over a powder field. The trick is finding one with a ride that matches your style.

GEAR OF THE YEAR

High Society

Temerity \$450

Merriam-Webster defines *temerity* as "foolhardy contempt of danger." That about sums it up. Testers found this all-mountain hero to be solid in even the nastiest conditions. It's a robust platform that dampens hard landings and offers a firm grip in no-fall zones. The directional twin shape makes it adept going switch without losing its freeride characteristics, and it manages to be soft and playful but also impressively stable. It's too stiff for beginners, and you'll want something else on powder days, but for all other situations, it's a near perfect daily driver.

highsocietyfreeride.com

RESPONSE: 4.5

VERSATILITY: 4

[OUT of 5]

MOUNTAIN
HARD
WEAR 

Nothing Keeps
You Warmer.



**Lightweight, durable insulation for every
degree of winter weather.**

Made with water-repellent Q.Shield® Down and
Thermal.Q™ Elite, the industry's warmest synthetic insulation.

#FindingWinter

Photos: Austin Siadak, Eastern Sierras

mountainhardwear.com



The Lib Tech and Never Summer boards have a **hybrid rocker-camber profile**—rocker between the feet, camber beneath—that balances float and edge control.

1. Lib Tech TRS \$560

BEST FOR: Freestyle riders conquering big terrain.

THE TEST: The Total Ripper Series is for advanced riders who see the entire mountain as their playground. Just enough rocker between the feet keeps this board afloat in soft snow, while extended camber offers what one tester described as “reliable stability” and another simply called “boing!” on harder snow. It carves quickly and fluidly from one edge to the other, and the low swing weight and high energy made for a playful ride. Seven serration points along the edge increase grip on hard-pack and add stopping power. The board comes in a smaller size for shorter riders.

THE VERDICT: The ideal blend of flex and power for hard chargers. lib-tech.com
RESPONSE: 4 / VERSATILITY: 3

2. Never Summer Funslinger \$510

BEST FOR: Parks and pipes.

THE TEST: The aptly named Funslinger excels in the terrain park. Riders who prefer soft rides that can absorb heavy impacts said it was their favorite board of the test. “Smooth as butter and makes you want to rip,” said one. It turns on a dime, with a long sidecut that initiates edges with minimal pressure. The wide platform keeps ollies and landings aligned and simplifies rail slides. Outside the park, the Funslinger is a bit noodly in steep, technical terrain, but it’s responsive enough to handle moguls. Concluded one giddy tester: “Pop. Snap. Spin. Stomp.”

THE VERDICT: A playful park board that absorbs impact. neversummer.com
RESPONSE: 5 / VERSATILITY: 3

3. Venture Storm \$595

BEST FOR: The steep and deep stuff.

THE TEST: “My new stick of choice where conditions vary from top to bottom—fresh, ice, corn, you name it,” said one tester. The Storm has flat camber underfoot for traction and stability, matched with extra rocker and softness in the nose, which allows it to remain atop deep snow. A short, stiff tail gives it stabilizing rigidity, so riders were confident that it wouldn’t chatter on hard landings. All that and it still manages to be exceptionally agile and responsive. “I just had to glance where I wanted to go and it went there,” said another tester.

THE VERDICT: An aggressive directional board for big lines in varied conditions. venture-snowboards.com
RESPONSE: 4 / VERSATILITY: 4

BINDINGS

With durable construction and ample baseplate cushion to absorb impact, the lightweight **Union Contact Pro** (\$250; unionbindingcompany.com) is ideal for all-mountain freestyle riders. Responsive and easy to adjust on the fly, it was this year’s tester favorite. For a superstiff, high-performance binding, we liked **Now’s O-Drive** (\$429; now-snowboarding.com). It’s soft underfoot, and Now’s Skate-Tech binding-to-board connection transfers energy straight to your edges, while a minimum 14 degrees of forward lean enhances power and control. The most comfortable baseplate we’ve ever tried made the **Amplid Balance C4.0** (\$290; amplid.com) a binding we loved, because we forgot it was even there. Thick but pliable spring-loaded straps allow fumble-free entry and a snug grip on your boot, and the highback’s carbon stringer shortens reaction time.

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Every board on this page has a **sintered base**, made from polyethylene pellets forced together under high pressure, which makes the surface more porous and better able to absorb wax.

4. Capita Mercury \$520

BEST FOR: Going fast and hard.

THE TEST: On powder, groomers, and steep terrain, the Mercury is a beast. "As soon as you put down the landing gear, you know it was made to stomp big airs," said one tester. Camber between the feet gives it energy with powerful recoil, and Capita added bamboo rods and carbon stringers to lighten the load and further boost spring. Testers reported little to no chatter in crud and found the Mercury extremely stable at high speed. The nose and tail are flat but rock upward symmetrically, so the directional profile floats in powder. Freestyle riders wanted more flex for flatland tricks, but it excelled in the pipe.

THE VERDICT: An energetic board for heavy hitters. capita.snowboarding.com
RESPONSE: 3 / **VERSATILITY:** 3

5. Jones Storm Chaser \$599

BEST FOR: Powder parties.

THE TEST: Jeremy Jones partnered with a surfboard shaper to design this powder hound with a wide profile and rocker from just inside the front foot to the blunt nose. Combined, those elements make for a lean, mean carving machine. "I didn't think riding powder could get any more fun. Then I stepped into the Storm Chaser," said one tester. Not that this board can't handle the hard stuff. "Surprising support on crusty traverses," noted another. And don't let the two length options (147 and 157) throw you: the Storm Chaser rides about ten centimeters longer than it is.

THE VERDICT: A premier powder board that doesn't mind hardpack or even catching air. jonessnowboards.com
RESPONSE: 4 / **VERSATILITY:** 3

6. Nitro Diablo \$500

BEST FOR: All-mountain freestyle.

THE TEST: Serious shredders who prefer twin tips for riding big, rowdy lines swear by the Diablo. It likes being driven with force, so lighter riders need to steer like they mean it and give it a good strong pop to catch decent air. The camber extends to the nose and tail before rocking upward, so the Diablo is damp over chunder and holds a great edge. The shape begins tapering out at the inserts to add even more direct control, and riders with large feet said they felt absolutely no toe drag. All our testers reported that landings were extremely solid, giving them the confidence to go big.

THE VERDICT: A devilish board for skilled big-mountain riders. nitrousa.com
RESPONSE: 3 / **VERSATILITY:** 3

BOOTS

The new **Burton SLX** (\$600; burton.com) performs better and feels much nicer on your foot than its predecessor, with softer cushioning and quicker response. Weighing in at almost three pounds, it's a bit heavier than last year's version, but it remains a solid choice for the backcountry. The versatile **ThirtyTwo TM-Two** (\$285; thirtytwo.com), Scott Stevens's pro model, has moderately stiff flex and gel cushioning, both of which improve stompability. Nice touch: the ankle flexes without heel lift. Charging off the T-bars, hiking gnarly pillow lines, and lapping the park never felt as natural as it does in **DC's Travis Rice** (\$400; dcshoes.com). The boot achieves equilibrium between tranquility and performance, with a luxurious liner, a locking ankle harness, dual Boa lacing, and both longitudinal and latitudinal rigidity. The best part: it was comfortable straight out of the box.

Upgrade: TECH TOOLS



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PLUG AND PLAY

Bump up your gadget game

BY WILL PALMER

1. Brunton All Day 2.0 power bank \$70

With a massive lithium battery, the All Day quintuples the energy stores of your GoPro—just leave the camera's battery in, replace the back housing with the All Day, and lock up. You can even simultaneously recharge your phone via a side port and the included two-in-one cord (Lightning and micro USB). brunton.com

2. Optrix by Body Glove Pro kit \$170

Made of clear polycarbonate, this case adventure-proofs your iPhone 6 so it can survive being submerged in 33 feet of water or suffering a 20-foot drop. On land, the four included lenses, including a 165-degree wide angle, 2x telephoto, and macro, let you capture a huge variety of shots. You can buy an additional fish-eye or 4x tele for \$40 each. optrix.com

3. Trace tracker \$200

Map My Air, anyone? Surfers, riders, and skiers need only mount this tough, mint-patty-size puck to their boards, pair it with the app, and ride. When you move, the Trace records speed, vertical, air time, and more. Store 50-plus sessions on the device (which lasts ten hours per charge) before uploading the data to a phone or computer. traceup.com

4. Kenu Highline leash From \$30

Fumbling with a phone, gloves, and poles while riding a chairlift is the perfect recipe for what we'll call the ultimate dropped call. Thus the simple beauty of this 10.5-inch-long stretchy band, which locks into the provided case (via Lightning port and a securing notch) and, on the other end, attaches to your belt loop. Available for iPhone 6 and 6 Plus. kenu.com

5. Goal Zero Flip 20 power bank \$50

Recharge your phone or headlamp twice with this solidly built energy-storage block. At a barely-there 4.6 ounces and no bigger than a jumbo pack of Doublemint gum, it'll slip into your jacket so you can charge on the go—a huge bonus if you forgot to plug in the night before. Then replenish the Flip 20 from any USB port. goalzero.com

6. GoPro 3-Way mount \$70

With a 20-inch-long hinged selfie arm, a handheld camera grip that lets you take shots free of errant fingertips, and a clever tripod stored in the handle, this smart GoPro accessory facilitates better on-snow footie. POV is still better accomplished with a helmet or chest mount, but the 3-Way allows for more variety—especially when passed among friends. Travelers, take note: it weighs only 6.4 ounces and folds down to 7.5 inches. gopro.com



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KILLER VALUE

HEAD CASES

Safety comes first BY JOE JACKSON

BEST FOR: Oddly Shaped Noggins

1. Giro Range MIPS \$240
Giro developed a unique ratcheting system that lets wearers adjust both the exterior shell and the interior liner for a custom fit. Result: the Range is the most comfortable helmet here. Well-placed vents and mesh ear pads make the whole package plenty breathable. giro.com

BEST FOR: Season-Long Use

2. Smith Vantage \$220
Our favorite helmet of the test, thanks to a slick, low-profile design that's packed with smart features, including grooves along the sides to hold goggles in place and a versatile two-part venting system that kept us happy in temperatures ranging from 25 to 60 degrees. smithoptics.com

BEST FOR: Spring Conditions

3. Sweet Protection Igniter MIPS \$250
The Igniter is one of the lightest (1.2 pounds), airiest (26 vents) lids on this page, ideal for warm resort days and long backcountry adventures. It also works with more goggles than any other helmet we tested. Our only gripe: the top vents don't close, so it isn't warm enough for cold days. sweetprotection.com

BEST FOR: Bold Style

4. Electric Saint \$135
Sleek motorcycle-inspired lines meet high on-snow performance in the Saint. With only ten vents, it's the least breathable helmet we tested, but what it lacks in temperature control it more than makes up for with its stunning good looks and comfortable fit. Note: the Saint runs small, so be sure to size it up. electriccalifornia.com

BEST FOR: The Park

5. POC Auric \$120
POC developed this ultimate park-rat helmet with input from pro freestyle skier and Olympian Aaron Blunck. The multi-impact Auric, meant to be worn over a beanie and goggles, covers the wearer's ears and temples with a hard shell, boosting protection without adding much weight. "Feels like a skate helmet—in a very good way," one tester raved. pocsports.com

BEST FOR: Warmth at Speed

6. Bollé Millenium \$130
So you like to mach down groomers on below-freezing days? This is your lid. The plush, furlike liner kept our noggins cozy, while the adjustment system in back let us dial in fit all the way around our temples, preventing cold air from creeping in. It gets extra style points for the classy, understated two-tone coloring. bolle.com



ADAPT INSTANTLY

CHRIS BENCHETLER



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photo : kyle martin



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**KILLER
VALUE**



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LOOK SHARP

Tools to vanquish flat light forever

BY MARC PERUZZI

1. Abominable Labs Abom \$250

Nothing ruins a ski day faster than foggy goggles. But the geniuses at Abominable Labs have a solution. The antifog Abom has a thin, invisible heater inside the double-layer lens that works like a rear-window defroster—that is to say, brilliantly. Leave it on low in wet conditions, and switch to Boost mode after a wipeout for a quick thaw. abom.com

2. Scott Sports LCG Compact \$199

Bluebird blower days are nice, but powder skiers spend more time in storms. During the nastiest conditions, we pulled out the LCG with its Illuminator lens. When it's dumping, this lightly filtered storm lens is unmatched for depth of field and low-light contrast. Bonus: the goggles come with a slick contoured spare-lens case. scott-sports.com

3. Zeal Optics Forecast \$239

Swapping lenses can be a hassle. That's why we prefer the impressively photochromic Forecast for variable-light days. In brilliant sun, the top-of-the-line Automatic+ lens lets in only 18 percent of visible light. In a storm, that light transmission jumps to 33 percent—and it transitions between those extremes in 30 seconds or less. zealoptics.com

4. Spy Ace for Protect Our Winters \$120

Buy these special-edition optics and three dollars from the sale helps the nonprofit POW fight climate change. Your reward: sweet-looking goggles built with Spy's new cylindrical lens for improved clarity and impact protection. The tint kept contrast sharp in conditions ranging from bright sun to vertigo-inducing gray. spyoptic.com

5. Oakley Flight Deck XM \$180

Oakley's Prizm lens—which lets in high-contrast colored rays to make terrain look sharp even on gray days—is the best we've ever seen for snow sports. We took the Flight Deck XM (a smaller version of last year's model) out in milky conditions and were blown away by how crisp the snowpack looked. Oakley says the lens is so good it improves reaction times. We buy that, and it seems to reduce eye fatigue, too. oakley.com

6. Rudy Project Klonyx Sferik \$249

The oddly named Klonyx Sferik ships with one versatile spherical lens, good for skiing everything from dark glades to sunny bowls. But it's the removable nose cover, which fights frost nip much better than a soggy neck gaiter, that really won us over. e-rudy.com

We used to pick lens tints—rose, yellow, gray—based on the conditions to eliminate bad light, cut glare, and add contrast. Now major brands like Oakley and Spy have made do-it-all options that both **reduce unhelpful light and boost the number of natural, vision-enhancing rays**, letting us detect changes in the terrain faster.

SMITH

Cody Townsend p: Tal Roberts



Once upon a hell of a time.

Our 50 years of innovation has helped us perfect what really matters — amplifying the thrill of human experience. Smith **ChromaPop™** lenses are the most advanced polarized lenses in the world. See true color and razor sharp definition. The *Guides Choice*.

The experience is everything.™

Essentials: SUNGLASSES

| 1



**KILLER
VALUE**

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REAL LOOKERS

Nothing beats a good view BY MIKE STEERE

1. Sunski Dipseas \$55

This metrosexy number turns up the style dial with delicious frame colors like the tortoise pictured. The outlook is cool and clear through polarized emerald lenses that are better than you'd expect at this price, though they don't give enough coverage for hardcore outdoorsiness. Big-headed guys only wish they could wear 'em, because the design's medium-smallish. sunskis.com

2. Under Armour Captain \$155

Ahoy. And huzzah. Normcore is dead—even, at last, in sunglasses designed for boating. UA builds in all the serious nautical necessities—anti-wetness lens coatings, anti-glare polarization, big coverage—in a unit that does not embarrass onshore. The Captain is also good for general action sports, but with the camo print and racy lines, it's probably a mite too athletic for the street. underarmour.com

3. Smith Tioga \$119

Smith freshens up its classic lifestyler, first introduced in 1993, with darkish polarized synthetic lenses that deliver a sharp-edged view in serious sun. The gray-green is a root sunglasses tint, going back decades, but there's nothing old-school about the super-sharp optics. Black frames make these shades all the more trad-manly. You're the boss. smithoptics.com

4. Dragon Marquis \$180

Deep purple-red lens mirroring thrums and sizzles, as if the Marquis stores gigawatts of power. The polarized optics amaze—crisp and high contrast with depth so deep, 3-D looks like 3.5. The Marquis has watersport bona fides, like liquid-shedding lens coatings and frames that float, but light leak at the sides disqualifies it as serious sportswear. dragonalliance.com

5. Zeal Optics Big Timber \$219

This chunky multisport wrap is a technological twofer. The synthetic lenses are both photochromic, meaning shading adjusts to light intensity, and polarized, so they filter out glare. The warm tint range—from yellow to denser brown—pumps up contrast and depth. Basically, you see things better sooner. zealoptics.com

6. Maui Jim Legends \$279

MJ delivers us from blah this winter with frames made out of a new, jumped-up synthetic reptile called Tokyo Tortoise. Likewise, there's a kink in the dressed-up design, which looks expensive without trying to. So superb are the optics of the polarized lenses, your reviewer mistook them for high-price glass. The lightish green-gray tint is great as long as the sun isn't hammering. mauijim.com



Get *outside.*

Skier: Owen Leeper Photo: Jeff Brockmeyer

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IF YOU NEVER TRY, YOU'LL NEVER SEE



DOGS OF WINTER

Keep yours shod in classy kicks

BY JON GUGALA

1. Timberland

Heston Mid \$170
The Heston's rich oxblood-mahogany hue is a subtle way to stand out at any post-ski watering hole. But this boot is hardly a style piece, with water-proof leather and a Gore-Tex bootie to protect your feet from parking-lot slush, plus a Pendleton wool collar to keep you toasty. timberland.com

2. SeaVees Army

Issue High \$138
If canvas high-tops are classic, then SeaVees' Army Issue sneaker is luxe. It's also damn useful after skiing. The oiled-suede upper repels snow while adding a hint of sophistication, the bamboo-canvas footbed reduces stink, and the gum-rubber outsole adds grip on sidewalks. seavees.com

3. Sorel

Cheyenne \$135
Sorel took the classic duck boot and slimmed it down without gutting it. Treated leather and sealed seams prevent water from seeping in, while the herringbone-patterned rubber outsole keeps you upright on slick cement. Plus, the seven ounces of synthetic insulation in the body are rated to minus 25 degrees, so you won't risk frostbite. sorel.com

4. OluKai

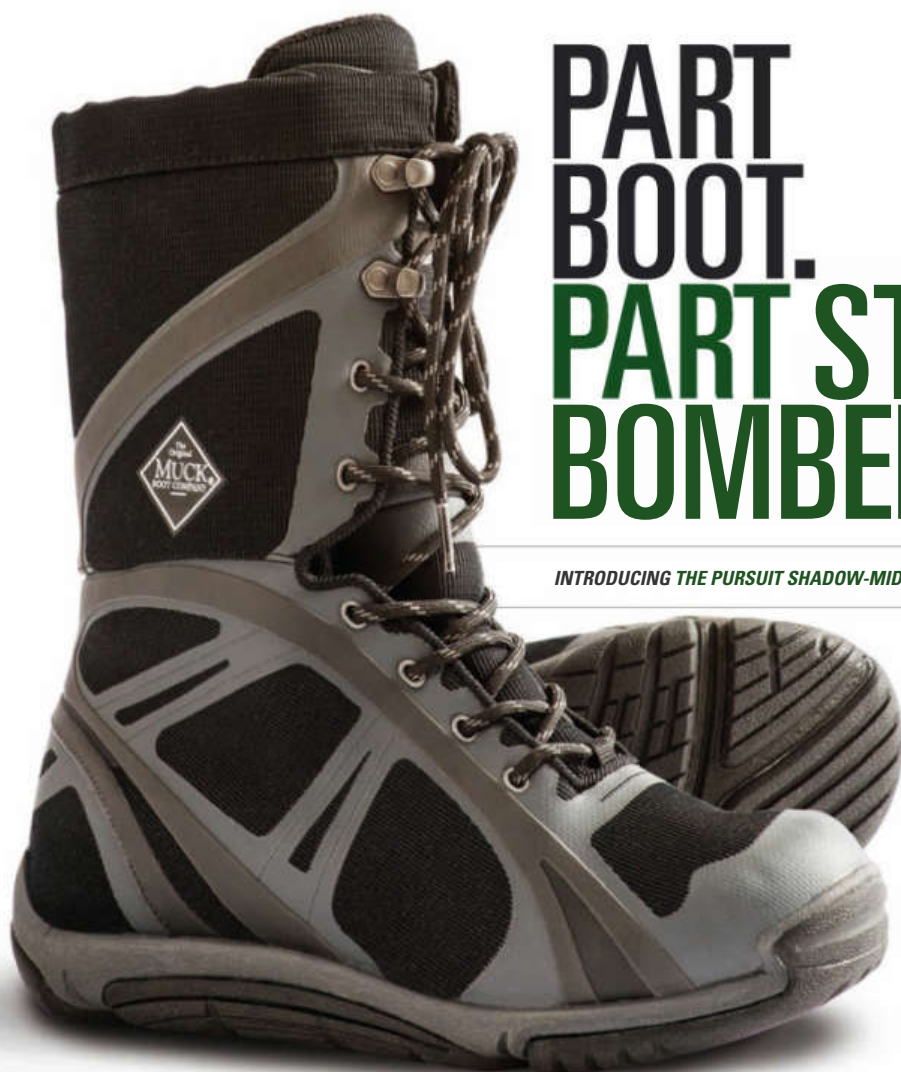
Moloo \$120
After a long day in ski boots, no man should have to wedge his feet into something uncomfortable. Thankfully, the Moloo slipper's drop heel makes slipping it on a cinch. The shearling liner and merino-covered footbed are plush against bare skin, perfect for a relaxed evening in front of a roaring fire. Bonus: the hand-sewn nubuck leather upper only gets cozier with wear. olukai.com

5. Adidas Outdoor

Satellize \$100
Think of Adidas's Satellize as a reverse mullet: party up top, business in the back. The stretchy upper is reminiscent of your favorite broken-in sweat-pants, the cushy midsole is as soft as a running shoe's, and the outsole is robust enough for short hikes. Take the good-looking high-top strutting on moonlit walks (or, better yet, do the moonwalk). adidas.com

6. Chrome

Industries 503 Combat \$170
The 2014 snow-pocalypse proved that winter can be war. Prepare for battle with Chrome's Combat boot. The knobby rubber tread sticks to slippery surfaces, and the tough Cordura upper means the Combat will probably outlast any other footwear you own. Bonus: bright reflective hits on the heel keep you visible on the way to the pub. chromeindustries.com



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MUCKBOOTCOMPANY.COM

Upgrade: INSULATED JACKETS

| 1



| 2



FEEL THE HEAT

Toasty layers for wild and urban adventures
BY MATT SKENAZY

1. Berghaus VapourLight Hydroloft Reversible Hoody \$220

Most reversibles give you two distinct styles and not much else. Not so the eight-ounce VapourLight. Wear the dual-tone fabric on the outside for increased wind protection, or flip it around for a bump in breathability. Perfect for high-output bike commuting or hiking the steeps. berghaus.com

2. Fjällräven Ovik 3 in 1 \$450

The Ovik is the warmest jacket here, with a detachable down-blend puffy liner tucked under a recycled-polyester and cotton shell that's weather resistant but not waterproof. Adjustable hem and cuffs combine with an elastic collar to keep the heat in on cold days. Come spring we split it up, using the insulated piece on early-morning hikes and the light outer layer for kicking around town. fjallraven.com

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**KILLER
VALUE**

3. Kitsbow Alpha Snap \$389

Leave it to Bay Area-based, style-conscious Kitsbow to make a shacket we actually want to wear. The Snap is formfitting with a subdued style: the only flourish is the color blocking on the elbows and forearms, where the designers added extra-durable fabric. Breathable Polartec Alpha insulation makes it much warmer than it looks. kitsbow.com

4. REI Stratocloud \$179

The Stratocloud boasts features found on jackets costing twice as much. Take the PrimaLoft Silver Down Blend insulation, a mix of ultrafine synthetic and natural fill; the water-resistant nylon exterior, which stands up to howling winds and light drizzles; and the articulated stretch cuffs. But we really knew this was a sweet rig when our tester refused to give it back. rei.com

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A cable porthole on the inside left pocket and a loop near the chest zipper **keep your tunes in place.**

5. United by Blue Drummond \$158

For most guys, vests are flair enough. Which is why we appreciate the simplicity of the Drummond. It's got some solid technical bona fides, too: a wool and recycled-polyester shell insulated with 500-fill duck down keeps you toasty, while a snap-button flap over the chest zipper blocks snow. The chambray liner is soft enough to wear against bare skin (but please don't). unitedbyblue.com

6. Aether Northerner \$395

It's built for the city, but thanks to its PrimaLoft Gold synthetic insulation, this jacket is still warm enough for the mountains. Testers liked the abundance of pockets (nine), while the chilled-out matte finish and refreshing lack of logos made it an après go-to. aetherapparel.com



FOR 5 MINUTES AT THE TOP

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Field Tested: CAMERAS



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| 2

SHARP SHOOTERS

Pro-caliber pics and video right from your pocket

BY MICHAEL FRANK

BEST FOR: Aspiring Pros

1. Nikon 1 J5 \$500

The lightning-fast 1 J5 can reel off an astonishing 60 frames per second in high definition. A touchscreen makes it easy to adjust settings on the fly, and it flips and twists for more angles. Even better, the camera works with more than 12 lenses and transfers files to your phone or desktop via Wi-Fi. nikonusa.com

BEST FOR: Instagram Heroes

2. Moment Case and Lens \$70 and \$100

The sturdy Case, for the iPhone 6 or 6 Plus, makes you a better smartphone photographer by serving as a mount for Moment's superb glass lenses. The sleek cover offers a sturdy grip and has its own shutter button, which depresses with satisfying heft. momentlens.co



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BEST FOR: Zooming In

3. Canon PowerShot SX710 HS \$350

Not many shooters this small pack a 30x zoom capable of capturing wide angles and distant objects with binocular-like sharpness. Even fewer come with a high-res 20.3-megapixel sensor. But these impressive specs belie the camera's amateur-friendly features, including a single ring to control zoom and intuitive graphics in manual mode. canon.com

BEST FOR: Mounting Anywhere

4. GoPro Hero4 Session \$400

At less than three ounces and just over a cubic inch, the Session is GoPro's smallest action cam to date. It's also the simplest to use, with a single button that turns the video (a decent 1080p at 60 frames per second) on and off. The camera housing is waterproof, so no additional case is required. gopro.com



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BEST FOR: Fitness Addicts

5. Garmin Virb XE \$400

The Virb XE captures HD footage, then, with an app's help, overlays it with data such as power, heart rate, and speed. The desktop software makes editing a breeze, and there's even a mobile app for compiling quick social-media clips on your phone. garmin.com

BEST FOR: Playing Rough

6. Olympus Stylus Tough TG-4 \$380

Lots of rugged cameras can withstand a beating, but few take good photos. The TG-4—which captures 16-megapixel images in RAW rather than JPEG for better depth and easier editing—does both. It also handles low-light conditions like a champ, thanks to 6,400 ISO and a fast, light-sensitive aperture. olympus.com

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SPIN DOCTORS

Durable timepieces for life on the go
BY WILL PALMER

1. Aulta Leeway Nylon \$105
Newcomer Aulta was hatched by industry vets with a love of surfing. The Leeway has a Japanese quartz movement and a tough 316-L steel case, and survives plunges down to 328 feet. It makes us want to drive our woody up onto the dunes and never leave. aultasurf.com

2. Szanto Pilot 4000 \$350
No solar power or tachymeter here—just basic good looks, with a seventies-feeling brown and gold face, a bronze-colored steel case, and a supple stitched-leather band. But

the vintage style is matched with high-quality quartz time-keeping. Subdials count up seconds and minutes, if you like to “run track,” as it used to be called. szantotime.com

3. Victorinox Swiss Army I.N.O.X. Naimakka Limited Edition \$625
That strap is a piece of Naimakka paracord that can be pulled apart and deployed to, say, tie a splint—and then sent back to Victorinox to be rewoven.

The housing is a superstrong steel I.N.O.X. case with removable bumper wraps. victorinox-watches.com

4. Casio G-Shock Gravitymaster \$950
This tricked-out Casio contains a GPS antenna, and it's the first watch to use hybrid radio-GPS technology to automatically set the time anywhere on earth. Extras include a solar panel on the face to recharge the battery

and an LED that can help you find your way in the dark. gshock.com

5. Nixon Moon Raider \$850
This jumbo-dialed (but not too heavy) tide watch is tailor-made for surfers. The screw-down crown is on the left to prevent wrist bite when paddling out, a simple high/low dial keeps you posted on tide status, and an ant glare treatment keeps it visible even in bright sun. nixon.com

6. Luminox Recon Team Leader 8840 chronograph \$795
The Recon pays homage to old-school navigation. Will you really use the compass rose, tachymetric scale, or map-reading ruler etched into the band? Probably not. But you'll love the tough sapphire crystal and lightweight, carbon-reinforced polycarbonate construction. Out late? Illumination on the numbers and hands glows for 25 years. luminox.com



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AETHER



ROCKIN' APRÈS

You can do better than ketchup and crackers
BY AXIE NAVAS

1. Zippo All-Terrain grill \$300

With an easy-to-set-up folding frame, rugged rubber-coated wheels, and 1.9 square feet of cooking space, the All-Terrain is your instant party starter. With a durable aluminum body and heavy-duty grate, it'll last for years. And it works just as well at campsites come summer. zippo.com

2. Therm-a-Rest Treo chair \$100

A camp chair is not an unnecessary

luxury in the parking lot—it's a throne you've earned with a day of hard charging. And this one is too easy not to pack: it's smaller than a bottle of wine and weighs just over two pounds. cascadedesigns.com

3. Stanley Classic Vacuum growler \$50

Après without beer is like winter without snow. The two-quart steel Classic keeps your cerveza cold for 28 hours or coffee hot for 18, thanks to its vacuum-insulated

body and foam-packed lid. Nice: the top stays open for one-handed pouring. stanley-pmi.com

4. Canada Goose Brookvale hoodie \$475

Made from super-packable down fill and a stretchy face fabric, this is the kind of insulator you keep at the ready year-round. Bonus points for the understated camo print. canada-goose.com

5. Ridgemont Monty Hi shoes \$99

The Monty Hi's oiled-suede upper is sufficiently waterproof to fend off light snow

and earns far more style points than your old rubber boots. It's also relatively lightweight, so your little stinkers will feel liberated after spending eight clammy hours strangled by heavy plastic shells. ridgemontoutfitters.com

6. Bigtruck Brand Pro hat \$35

The flat-brimmed mafia has taken over—and we're fine with that. Our lid of choice is made by Lake Tahoe's Bigtruck Brand, which was started five years ago by two friends who wanted to make high-quality, good-looking

caps for people living and playing in the mountains. bigtruckbrand.com

7. Snow Peak Silicone wineglass \$27

It may look like glass, but it's made of a foldable, unbreakable lightweight silicone for easy packing and worry-free drinking. Available in tumbler and Old Fashioned versions, too. snowpeak.com

8. Bose SoundLink Color Bluetooth speaker \$130

This portable sound machine is loud enough to get your crew shakin' and delivers the excellent

acoustics expected from the Massachusetts-based audio-equipment company. Syncs seamlessly with a smartphone and—aw, yeah—comes in five fun colors. bose.com

9. Spy Discord Kaleidoscope sunglasses \$120

We've been casual fans of the Kaleidoscope's chunky frame and high-quality signature lenses for a while. Now we're full-on groupies. This year it comes in a wide range of translucent, neon-bright frames to match your *Hot Dog... The Movie* ski kit. spyoptic.com



DRINKING HORN

MADE OUT OF ANIMAL SKULL PARTS

KEEPS ICE FOR ABOUT 8 MINUTES

FITS AWKWARDLY IN CUP HOLDERS

USUALLY RESERVED FOR EMERGING
FROM BATTLE VICTORIOUS

GREAT IF YOU'RE A FAN OF WARM MEAD

YOU HAVE TO WRESTLE AND DEHORN AN
800-LB. MUSK OX TO OBTAIN ONE

VS

YETI RAMBLER™

MADE WITH KITCHEN-GRADE 18/8 STAINLESS STEEL
FOR DURABILITY AND ALL-AROUND SANITATION

KEEPS ICE ALL DAY

FITS PERFECTLY IN CUP HOLDERS

IDEAL FOR EVERYDAY USE

GREAT IF YOU'RE A FAN OF
ANY OTHER BEVERAGE

YOU CAN JUST BUY ONE AT THAT STORE
NEAR YOUR HOUSE OR AT YETICOOLERS.COM

THE SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT DRINKING VESSEL IS OVER

YETI





Going big
at Snowbird

ANYWAY YOU WANNA PLAY IT

NO MATTER HOW YOU LIKE TO SKI OR HOW LONG YOU CAN TAKE OFF WORK, WE'VE GOT
THE PERFECT TRIP IN OUR GUIDE TO THE BEST ALPINE ESCAPES OF THE SEASON
BY MEGAN MICHELSON

Snowbird
freshies**EASY DOES IT**

Spend your time on the hill, not getting there

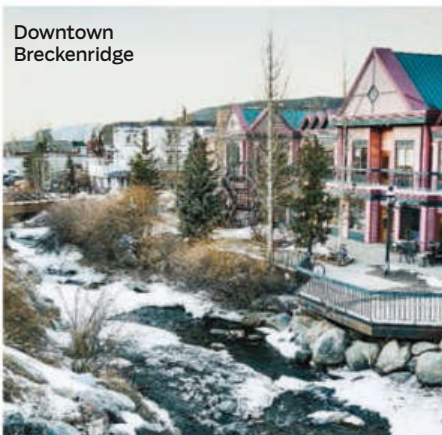
BRECKENRIDGE, COLORADO

In Breck, you'll get the quintessential Colorado ski-town vibe, pronto. Make the two-hour drive from Denver International Airport and check into the recently remodeled Bivouac (from \$49; thebivvi.com), a Euro-style hostel with bunk rooms, craft beer, and free power-up breakfasts. On the mountain, drop into the steep chutes off the Imperial chair or above-treeline bowls on Peak 6, which opened in 2013 with 540 new acres. Then head for wings and dollar PBRs at Northside Pizza. When storms roll in, the summit

elevation of 12,998 feet ensures cold-smoke powder. breckenridge.com

CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN, WASHINGTON

This resort in the shadow of Mount Ranier is just a two-hour drive from Seattle's dim-sum cafés and bike commuters, but you'll feel miles away. Check into the Silver Skis Chalet (from \$270; silverskis.chalet.com), walking distance from the gondola. The resort installed two new lifts last year: the Quicksilver quad, ideal for intermediate skiers looking for rolling groomers, and the High Campbell chair, which ac-

Downtown
Breckenridge

cesses the rugged Southback region, including the hike-to 7,012-foot Silver King Peak. Even during last year's lousy winter, Crystal got 234 inches of snow. But a more typical forecast is 486. crystallmountainresort.com

SNOWBIRD, UTAH

It's tough to beat Snowbird for quick access to top-notch

terrain. Grab a 45-minute shuttle from the Salt Lake City airport (from \$39; canyontransport.com) to a slopeside room at the Cliff Lodge (from \$250; snowbird.com). You could spend all weekend bombing 3,000-vertical-foot laps off the tram's chute-riddled Cirque Traverse, but then you'd miss

The back
deck at
the Bivvi

out on the powder stashes off the new high-speed Gad 2 lift and the expansive clearings in Mineral Basin. This winter, Snowbird unveils its new Summit restaurant, in place of the patrol shack at the top of the tram, a 23,000-square-foot outpost with huge windows for views of the Wasatch and a roomy deck for blue-sky days. Snowbird tends to stay open the longest of any Utah resort, but February and March are your best bets for a taste of Utah's famous lightweight pow. snowbird.com

SUGARBUSH, VERMONT

This Green Mountain gem is three hours by car from Boston or five from New York City. Or fly into Burlington and have the valet service from Sugarbush's Clay Brook hotel escort you to your ski-in, ski-out suite, which feels like a cozy mountain home with hardwood floors and a chef's kitchen (from \$421; sugarbush.com). Sugarbush replaced its ancient double chairlift to Gadd Peak with a high-speed quad this off-season, which means you'll

get more runs through the empty glades of Christmas Tree Woods and the steeps of Stein's Run. Sign up for the Max 4 Adventure Workshop to boost your skill level in some of the East's most advanced terrain, like the 2,000-acre Slide Brook Wilderness (from \$70). sugarbush.com

CATCHING AIR

Key landing strips for big-mountain access

Salt Lake City International, Utah

The Delta hub gets direct flights from most U.S. cities, and ski shuttles can reach ten resorts in under an hour.

Ted Stevens Anchorage International, Alaska

Award-winning snow removal on the runways of this portal to heli heaven means flights rarely get canceled.

Aspen/Pitkin County, Colorado

It's tiny, but it sees direct flights from around the country on American, Delta, and United. Located just ten minutes from downtown Aspen.



Steep and deep at Jackson Hole



A powder day in Crested Butte



Squaw Valley's PlumpJack Inn

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SNOW

Where serious skiers go to play

JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING

This is arguably your best bet for scoring powder days in the lower 48. To celebrate the 50th anniversary, Jackson is offering half-price lift tickets to pass holders from any other resort for three weeks this January. The other big news: the brand-new Teton lift will access 200 acres of gladed, intermediate-friendly terrain, much of which you could previously reach only via a lengthy hike. Ride the tram to the top of 10,450-foot

Rendezvous Peak, scarf a bacon-and-peanut-butter waffle from Corbet's Cabin, then burn it off lapping the bumps on Cheyenne Bowl. Check into the village's LEED-certified Hotel Terra and stay put for its elk ragu pappardelle (from \$239; hotelterrajacksonhole.com). jacksonhole.com

SUGARLOAF, MAINE

Getting there requires some work: it's a four-hour drive from Boston or three hours from Portland or Bangor, Maine. But the

payoff is the largest ski area on the Right Coast (1,230 acres). The resort opened the summit of Burnt Mountain for the first time in 2014, offering 1,200 vertical feet of rugged hike-to terrain, a rare find this side of the Mississippi. Reserve a room at the Sugarloaf Mountain Hotel for a suite steps from the SuperQuad (from \$89). For dinner, chow down on the Bag Burger at the Bag and Kettle. sugarloaf.com

CRESTED BUTTE, COLORADO

The mountain is a four-hour drive from Denver and feels way out there compared with the cluster of ski areas on the I-70 corridor. Last February, the resort opened Teo 2, a 50-acre back bowl that's a sneak peek

at a proposed 500-acre expansion that could include two new lifts. Challenge yourself on the precipitous chutes off the North Face T-bar, or relax on the endless groomers down to East River. Then grab a drink on the 2,400-square-foot deck at the new on-mountain Umbrella Bar. In the evening, check into your room at the Grand Lodge, which has ski-valet service right by the lifts for the next morning (from \$169; skicb.com/deals). Then ride the free bus into town for farm-fresh fare at Sunflower. skicb.com

SQUAW VALLEY ALPINE MEADOWS, CALIFORNIA

Last spring, JetBlue started daily non-stop flights from New York's JFK to

POWDER STASHES

Smaller mountains that get buried

Jay Peak, Vermont: While Boston got pummeled last winter, Jay reported 373 inches, more than any in the West. jaypeakresort.com

Wolf Creek, Colorado: An outpost 4.5 hours from Denver with great early-season snow—an average of almost 100 inches in December. wolfcreekski.com

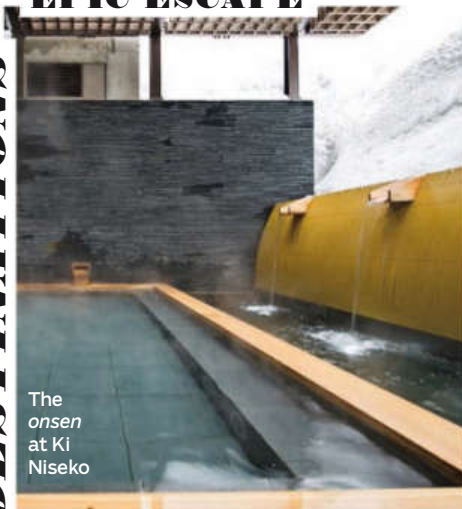
Whitewater, British Columbia: This diamond in the rough averages almost 500 inches a year. skiwhitewater.com

Reno, Nevada, which is just an hour from Squaw's legendary KT-22 lift. Stay at the PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn, next to the tram (from \$280; plumpjacksquawvalleyinn.com), and spend at least a couple of days at neighboring Alpine Meadows (reached by a free shuttle), known for its hike-to side bowls. Squaw Valley's Siberia Express has been upgraded to a brand-

new six-person lift, which will have you straight-lining chutes in the Palisades quicker than ever. After skiing, head to Mamasake for drinks and excellent sushi. The past three winters in the Sierra Nevada have been lackluster, but a strong El Niño is forecast for this winter, which should bring some very much needed mega dumps. squawalpine.com

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: PAUL DYER PHOTOGRAPHY; BUD FORCE/AURORA; JAY GOODRICH/TANDEM

EPIC ESCAPE



The onsen at Ki Niseko



Boot-packing Highland Bowl in Aspen



A mid-mountain dance party at Highlands



Tight trees in Whistler



Another deep day in Niseko



Verbier chalets

GO DEEP

Come for the mountains, stay for the culture

NISEKO, JAPAN

Japan has been unbeatable for snowfall in recent winters, and Niseko, on the northern island of Hokkaido, has held its reputation as an otherworldly powder paradise. Fly into New Chitose Airport in Sapporo and book a private transfer (from about \$250; skybus.co.jp), then start exploring the four overlapping areas on the mountain—your pass covers them all. Don't miss the boot-pack to the top of 4,291-foot Annupuri or the midday ramen at the Lookout Café. Stay at Ki Niseko, a

new boutique hotel that opened last winter at the base of Niseko's Grand Hirafu resort and offers views of the volcano Mount Yotei (from \$300; kiniseko.com). After making your turns, soothe tired muscles in the hotel's onsen, a traditional hot-spring-fed mineral bath complete with saunas and cold plunges.

WHISTLER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

No other resort in the world offers such a potent combo of quality terrain and bustling

nightlife. Fly into Vancouver and take the bus (from \$55; pacificoach.com) two and a half hours to Whistler Village, where you won't need a car. With 8,100 acres and over 5,000 vertical feet from top to bottom, Whistler demands a full week of riding. Start on Blackcomb Mountain and take the quad-quivering trek out to Spanky's Ladder. Then make your way to the Peak 2 Peak gondola for the nearly three-mile-long ride over to Whistler Mountain, where the steeps of Whistler Bowl can keep you challenged for hours on end. Refuel with locally cured meats and wine at Basalt

Wine and Salumeria, and stay at the stylish, modern Aava Hotel Whistler (from \$170; aavawhistlerhotel.com).

VERBIER, SWITZERLAND

The Alps offer extraordinary lines and enticing mountain culture. Fly to Geneva and take the stunning three-hour train ride to Verbier, then check into the Central Hotel for balcony rooms, flaky pastries for breakfast, and easy access to the Médran lift (from \$200; centralhotelverbier.com). From Médran, string together lifts and cable cars to the top of 10,925-foot Mont-Fort, then

schuss down open swaths to the Siviez base, where *croûte au fromage* awaits. One of the best parts about skiing there: you don't have to venture far for untracked snow, since Euros mainly stick to the piste, leaving powder for those willing to traverse.

ASPEN, COLORADO

Who needs Europe when there's Aspen? You can ski 3,200-foot gondola laps by day and take in contemporary masterpieces at the new Shigeru Ban—designed Aspen Art Museum in the evening. With four mountains to choose from, you'll never ski the same

run twice. At Aspen Highlands, boot-pack to the steeps off 12,392-foot Highland Bowl, then tackle bumps on the Deep Temerity lift. On day two, head to Buttermilk for the mountain's X Games—worthy terrain parks, or rent alpine-touring gear at Ute Mountaineer for an uphill workout—it's allowed even when the lifts are running (\$50; utemountaineer.com). When you've had your fill, snag a room downtown at the Limelight Hotel, which has a European-style breakfast spread and a robust après scene with local bands (from \$350; limelighthotel.com).



A huge line at Alta

ALL ACCESS

Combo deals just keep getting better

Epic Pass \$769

and up

RESORTS: Unlimited days at Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Keystone, Arapahoe Basin, Park City, Heavenly, Northstar, Kirkwood, Afton Alps, Mount Brighton, and, new this winter, Australia's Perisher.

ADDITIONAL

PERKS: Six discounted lift tickets for friends and family.

BREAK-EVEN

POINT: Five days at Vail. snow.com

Mountain Collective

\$389 and up

RESORTS: Two days each at Alta/Snowbird, Lake Louise/

Sunshine Village, Mammoth, Jackson Hole, Whistler Blackcomb, Aspen Snowmass, Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows, and, new for this year, Sun Valley, Stowe, and Taos.

ADDITIONAL

PERKS: Half-price additional days, plus two bonus days at Japan's Hakuba Valley.

BREAK-EVEN

POINT: Four days at most participating resorts. mountaincollective.com

Rocky Mountain Super Pass+

\$559 and up

RESORTS: Unlimited access at Winter Park, Copper Moun-

tain, and Eldora, plus six days at Steamboat, three days at Crested Butte, and seven days at New Zealand's Mount Ruapehu.

ADDITIONAL

PERKS: Discounted tickets for friends and family, plus reduced rates on gear and lodging

BREAK-EVEN

POINT: Five days at Winter Park or seven at Copper or Eldora. skicolorado.com

M.A.X. Pass

\$699 and up

RESORTS: This new pass gives you five days at 22 mountains on both the East Coast—at resorts like Sugarloaf, Stratton, and Killington—and the West Coast, includ-

ing Steamboat, Big Sky, and Brighton.

ADDITIONAL

PERKS: Already have a season pass to one of the participating resorts? Purchase a M.A.X. Pass Add-On for \$249 and get five days at the other 21 resorts.

BREAK-EVEN

POINT: Two weekends at Stratton plus a three-day trip to Big Sky. themaxpass.com

Ski Utah Gold Pass \$4,300

RESORTS: One hundred days at Park City and 50 at each one of Utah's other 13 resorts, and it's transferable to your friends and family when you're not using it.

ADDITIONAL

PERKS: Use the lifts in summer for hiking and biking.

BREAK-EVEN

POINT: About 40 days of skiing. skiutah.com

Powder Alliance

Price Varies

RESORTS: Buy a season pass to one of 13 resorts, including Bridger Bowl, Stevens Pass, Crested Butte, Schweitzer, Sierra-at-Tahoe, or Snowbasin, and you'll get three free days of skiing at each of the partner resorts.

ADDITIONAL

PERKS: Discounts on lodging, plus reduced-rate single tickets at many of the participating resorts.

BREAK-EVEN

POINT: Depends, but likely five or six days at your home resort. powderalliance.com

Tahoe Super Pass Gold \$809

RESORTS: Unlimited access to Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows, plus four days each at Sierra-at-Tahoe and Sugar Bowl.

ADDITIONAL

PERKS: Discounts on friends' and relatives' tickets, food, gear, and more, plus half-price tickets at resorts in the Mountain Collective.

BREAK-EVEN

POINT: Six days—and if you come up short, you can get credit for next year. squawalpine.com



MAKE STRIDES

Faster, more comfortable kicks for all conditions **BY JUSTIN NYBERG**

There is a great divide among runners: those who pick their shoes for speed and those who choose for comfort. The firmer and thinner the midsole, the faster and more efficient a shoe will be, but the harder it will be on your feet. The softer the midsole and the more supportive the shoe, the better your legs will feel—at great cost to your pace. Or so we thought. Today's most innovative footwear has been developed at the intersection of these conflicting design principles. Every shoe our team selected this year found a new, refreshing balance in the yin and yang of rush and plush. And no shoe traversed that divide better than Nike's Pegasus, now in its 33rd year, with equal doses of speed and comfort that no other contender could match.

GEAR OF THE YEAR

Nike Air Zoom Pegasus 32 \$110

It's hard to decide if this is a speed shoe for the masses or a training shoe for the fleet of foot. That's a great sign. Pliant, light, and soft, it immediately wooed faster runners looking for a responsive, tempo-ready shoe, as well as our cruise-minded testers, who appreciated the soft foam and moderately heel-strike-oriented midsole. But it was the new, customizable fit of the mesh upper that sold us. The Pegasus uses a lattice of overlapping cables that independently apply tension to keep almost any foot shape locked in place. Where this shoe hit its limits was on longer outings and under heavier loads—the flexy forefoot and thin midsole can feel under-structured for tired feet or bigger runners. But on most days, this is as good as a lightweight trainer gets. 10.8 oz; 10 mm drop; nike.com
COMFORT: 5 / SPEED: 4.5 [OUT OF 5]

The Altra logo, featuring a stylized white wing above the word "ALTRA" in a bold, white, sans-serif font.A side profile of an Altra Lone Peak NeoShell running shoe, primarily yellow with grey accents and a white Altra wing logo. The shoe is shown splashing through water, with its tread pattern visible. Above the shoe, a large, dark, textured shape resembling a foot is shown, with the text "EXPERIENCE FOOTSHAPE FREEDOM" and "BETTER THAN WATERPROOF" overlaid on it.

EXPERIENCE FOOTSHAPE FREEDOM

BETTER THAN
WATERPROOF

LONE PEAK™ WITH
 POLARTEC
NeoShell
TRAIL / MODERATE CUSHION

WHAT GOOD IS WATERPROOF WHEN YOUR FEET ARE SITTING IN A PUDDLE OF SWEAT? THE NEW LONE PEAK NEO-SHELL™ IS MADE OF A REVOLUTIONARY NEW FABRIC THAT'S WATERPROOF ON THE OUTSIDE, YET BREATHABLE FROM THE INSIDE. IT'S DESIGNED TO FIGHT OFF WATER AND RELEASE HEAT TO KEEP YOUR FEET COOL AND DRY. PLUS, ALTRA'S FOOTSHAPE™ TOE BOX LETS YOUR TOES RELAX AND SPREAD OUT NATURALLY FOR GREATER STABILITY AND COMFORT IN SHIFTING TERRAIN.

ALTRARUNNING.COM | [#ZEROLIMITS](https://twitter.com/ZEROLIMITS)

New Balance Vazee Pace \$110**BEST FOR:** Going fast and long.

THE TEST: "These shoes are absolutely amazing," said one tester after several long runs. "Lightweight, and incredible fit." Equal parts feathery racing shoe and stable, midfoot-striking trainer, the Vazee was one of the more impressive new entries of the year—an extremely responsive ride that still feels steady and supportive on longer hauls. We loved the second-skin fit, nicely padded tongue, and flexy heel counter. Heavier landers and less-efficient runners might find the foam a bit thin, but most of our team thought there was enough squish to sap road sting.

THE VERDICT: A great-fitting shoe for faster and efficiency-minded runners.

7.5 oz; 6 mm drop; newbalance.com

COMFORT: 4.5 / SPEED: 5

Mizuno Wave Enigma 5 \$150**BEST FOR:** A bit of pop in your long-haul truckers.

THE TEST: The Enigma is a workhorse—a durable, high-mileage comfort shoe with a heel-strike-oriented midsole, good structure, and a forgiving feel. "Plush and just plain easy to wear," one tester said. A shoe-length plastic plate gives the narrow-fitting Enigma considerably more responsiveness than its foamy cousins (although it loses some smoothness in the transition from heel strike to midstance). We loved the snug fit, thick tongue, and stretchy laces. While it's by no means a slow shoe, you'll want something else for sprint days.

THE VERDICT: Our favorite high-mileage trainer this year. 10.9 oz; 12 mm drop; mizunousa.com

COMFORT: 4 / SPEED: 3.5

Adidas Supernova Sequence**Boost 8** \$130**BEST FOR:** Cruising in comfort.

THE TEST: Like a good summer blockbuster, the Sequence Boost is going for mass appeal. It has what most runners look for in a traditional trainer: a secure and structured upper, generous padding around the tongue and heel, and a roomy toe box. The midsole is half EVA foam and half Adidas's soft, springy Boost material, creating a damp, almost sluggish ride. A few plastic structural pieces in the midfoot and medial heel add stability. While the Sequence Boost pays a bit of a weight penalty, we still loved it for going long.

THE VERDICT: A dependable, confidence-inspiring shoe if you're happy taking it easy. 11.9 oz; 10 mm drop; adidas.com

COMFORT: 4 / SPEED: 3.5

On the outsole, Adidas uses a **thin layer of heavy Continental rubber**—great on wet surfaces and supremely durable.





MEGA GRIP. MEGA ADVENTURE.

MERRELL ALLOUT PEAK
Powered by
Vibram MEGAGRIP

MERRELL 

VIBRAM® MEGAGRIP



**The new high performance
rubber compound.**

- Unparalleled grip on wet and dry surfaces
- Rugged longevity
- Optimal ground adaptability

vibram.com     

Trail

The North Face Ultra MT \$130

BEST FOR: Technical running.

THE TEST: This shoe has the DNA of a mountain goat. With five-millimeter lugs for bite in loose turf, a sticky Vibram outsole, and an exceptionally secure fit, the Ultra MT was born to motor over gnarly trails. The heel is firm and thick enough to blunt the pain of hard landings and long outings, while the forefoot is thin, fast, and responsive on variable terrain. Chief quibbles: the slender laces quickly go from loose to too tight, and the thin tongue can rub on high insteps. Wide and weird feet beware, the fit is not all that forgiving.

THE VERDICT: A true top-caliber mountain runner without much of a lazy streak. 10.4 oz; 8 mm drop; thenorthface.com
PROTECTION: 4 / SPEED: 4.5

Vasque Pendulum II \$120

BEST FOR: All-condition cruising.

THE TEST: The Pendulum settles halfway between the minimalist and maximalist camps. It has the moderately toothy outsole, protective rock plate, and fairly thick and firm midsole of a muscular trail shoe, but a pared-back upper and six millimeters of drop keep the stride natural. Multiple testers noted the secure, locked-in midfoot. "Sticks to you with no tight spots or sloshing," one said. Still, the Pendulum is rather roomy, so it's best for wide feet or thick socks. Bonus: the midsize lugs make muck runs a breeze.

THE VERDICT: A highly versatile, protective winter runner that doesn't overdo anything. 10.2 oz; 6 mm drop; vasque.com
PROTECTION: 4.5 / SPEED: 3.5

Hoka Speedgoat \$140

BEST FOR: Soft. Soft. Soft.

THE TEST: Imagine running on Wonder Bread. With 33 millimeters of foam in the heel and 28 in the forefoot, each step sinks into virtually bottomless mush. It's billed as a race shoe for technical routes, but we found the midsole too high off the trail and the light upper too unstructured to speed over rocky terrain. While the flat-tire feel saps forward energy, it's a lifesaver on epic days and punishing downhills, and the turnover is still pretty quick. Said one tester, "The most comfortable shoes I've ever worn on-trail. Period."

THE VERDICT: The leg-saving float of your dreams, but steer clear of turbulence. 9.7 oz; 5 mm drop; hokaone.com
PROTECTION: 5 / SPEED: 4

The North Face's **FlashDry technology in the heel collar** speeds sweat evaporation, and thus reduces blisters.



thank you
first of
many

photo by @bubritt85

thank you running

The moment when you slip on that first race medal is hard to beat. And with Glycerin 13's Super DNA midsole, you'll get perfect, dynamic cushioning that instantly adapts to your every step. That's a wonderful thing, because now that you've achieved this milestone you'll want to get right out and start training for that next big race. Learn more at brooksrunning.com

Winter

Altra Lone Peak

Neoshell \$150

BEST FOR: Staying dry.

THE TEST: The Lone Peak's coolest feature is its upper, a highly breathable Polartec Neoshell waterproof barrier (instead of the usual Gore-Tex insert) that prevents snow-melt from soaking the body and weighing it down. Beyond that our team was split. Some testers praised the minimalist ride—the soft, zero-drop midsole has a natural “house-slipper feel,” as one tester put it. Others lampooned the ultra-high-volume forefoot and zero-structure upper.

THE VERDICT: A minimalist, waterproof cruiser without the road slap, but the design feels a bit undercooked. 11.5 oz; zero drop; altrarunning.com
PROTECTION: 3 / **SPEED:** 3.5

Merrell All Out Terra Ice Waterproof

\$180

BEST FOR: Frozen trails and roads.

THE TEST: The nine carbide-tipped spikes in the sole of the All Out Terra Ice offer amazingly confident purchase even on glare ice, and the waterproof upper made this shoe a standout on packed snow. The nicely padded tongue and comfortable midsole make for a warm ride, although its nearly 13 ounces of heft slows the turnover a bit. One obvious quirk: the loose heel gave an unusually insecure rear-foot fit—a strange feeling but not a deal breaker.

THE VERDICT: A winter warrior that will rescue much of your cold-weather running. 12.8 oz; 6 mm drop; merrell.com
PROTECTION: 4.5 / **SPEED:** 4

Brooks Adrenaline ASR 12 GTX

\$150

BEST FOR: Easy winter days.

THE TEST: The Adrenaline is an emphatic traditionalist. With thick overlays and a plush upper, it was a go-to for our heavier runners and moderate pronators who crave stability, comfort, and high-mileage support without the weight penalty. On inclement days, the Gore-Tex upper and tightly packed lugs made it an excellent crossover shoe. While the thick, moderately firm midsole is responsive, the shoe is a bit slow. Note the 12-millimeter drop, which steers the Adrenaline toward heel strikers.

THE VERDICT: A steady, versatile workhorse for nasty conditions. 11.8 oz; 12 mm drop; brooksrunning.com
PROTECTION: 4.5 / **SPEED:** 3

TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Running-shoe jargon is full of code words—most devised by marketing departments to make a shoe sound universally appealing. Here are some helpful translations. —J.N.

All-terrain: Good for road or trail but rarely great for either.

High energy return: A slightly springy feel; mostly a misnomer. Also called responsiveness.

Performance fit: Narrow, secure. Maybe a bit cramped.

Ground feel: Efficiency. Agility. But also, ouch.

The Neoshell membrane on the Altra is **extremely breathable**, though slightly less waterproof than most Gore-Tex shoe applications.



MIKE RUTT - HOKA ONE ONE ELITE 800 METER RUNNER



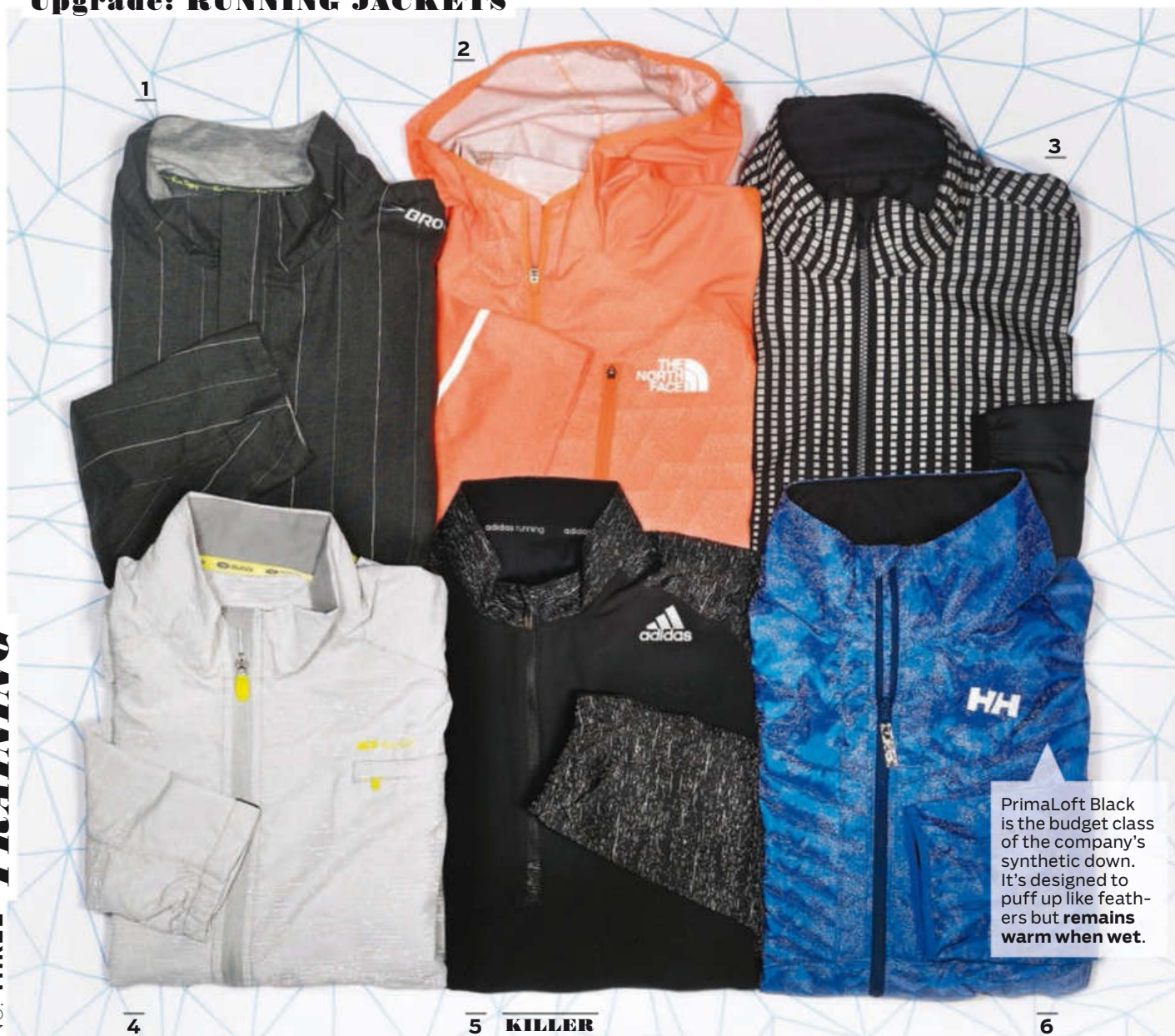
THIS IS NOT A SHOE. THIS IS AN INVITATION. YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUESTED TO GO POUND THE PAVEMENT, GIVE THE HILLS A LITTLE HELL, AND PUT YOUR DAILY AMBITION TO THE TEST. TO GO UPTOWN, DOWNTOWN, CROSSTOWN, AND, FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES, TO GET OUT-OF-TOWN. TO GO EXPRESS. TO BE A LOCAL. TO GO WITH THE CLIFTON 2 - 8.3 OUNCES OF SMOOTH RUNNING THAT SHOWS THESE STREETS WHO'S BOSS. LET'S GO.

HOKA ONE ONE

HOKAONEONE.COM



Upgrade: RUNNING JACKETS



LIGHT AND BRIGHT

Six jackets to help you log miles—safely—by trail or road **BY JUSTIN NYBERG**

1. Brooks Bolt \$140

Thicker and more insulating than the other shells here, the Bolt showed legit wind and water resistance, although it was a bit stiffer and heavier than the other options—best suited for easy cold-weather runs. The hem cinch and media pouch tucked into the zippered pocket are nice touches. 13.6 oz; brooksrunning.com

2. The North Face Ultra Lite Waterproof \$150

If you haven't yet known the well-ventilated glory of a short-sleeve waterproof jacket, start here. Slim, pocket compressible, and supple, the Ultra Lite offers all the storm protection you need without the oppressive mugginess of a full-sleeve shell. 4.9 oz; thenorthface.com

3. Saucony Sonic Reflex \$135

Bold by day, bold by night—the garish pattern of trickle-down squares on the Sonic Reflex's shoulders and chest shines like a disco ball. Beyond that, it's a traditional polyester wind-breaker with a fluid, soft-on-skin feel, decent breathability (credit the stretchy mesh underarm panels), and a snag-proof zipper. A great option for shoulder-season weather. 7 oz; saucony.com

4. Sugoi Zap Run \$160

The Zap has the brightest reflectivity on this page. It's a stout polyester wind shell absolutely loaded with features: Velcro wrist cuffs, zippered waist pockets, and a hem draw cord. The downside is that all those extras add weight. Given the heft and the lack of breathability, we liked it best in strong winds and weather that's teetering on the edge of a storm. 3.4 oz; sugoi.com

5. Adidas Supernova Storm Half-Zip \$65

The half-zip Supernova is a master at climate control—a thin, stretchy back panel dumps heat, while the wind-blocking polyester sleeves and comfortable soft-shell nylon front panel curb icy gusts. Secret weapon: when the Supernova is hit with headlights, the static-like graphic on the sleeves and shoulders blooms brightly to life. 8.8 oz; adidas.com

6. Helly Hansen Pace Norviz Heat \$160

The Norviz would be a pretty average wind shell but for two things: baffles of insulation across the chest, and a reflective splatter print that hides by day but comes out when light hits it. The Norviz's reflectivity was the least bright of the jackets we tested, but its wind-blocking chops kept it in our rotation for use on dry, frosty nights. 6.9 oz; hellyhansen.com

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Field Tested: RUNNING TECH

| 1

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VALUE

| 2



READY TO WEAR

On your mark, get set, track!

BY MICHAEL FRANK

BEST FOR: Minimalists

1. Timex Ironman Run x20 GPS \$103
Like its more expensive siblings, the x20 accurately tracks pace and distance, counts laps, and sets intervals. And that's it. It can't sync with a heart-rate monitor or third-party apps. But what it lacks in bells and whistles it more than makes up for with its attractive, comfortable design and easy-to-read display. timex.com

BEST FOR: Newbies

2. Polar M400 \$250
This is the most intuitive running watch here. The GPS tracks flawlessly, the display graphics are clear, and you can choose from several data screens (think lap time, speed, and heart rate). All that in one of the smallest GPS-enabled watches out there. Bummer: syncing with third-party apps is frustratingly tricky. polar.com

| 3



| 4



BEST FOR: Fixing Your Form

3. Sensoria Fitness Smart Socks \$199
By embedding electronic threads and thin, surprisingly comfortable anklets into socks, Sensoria helps improve your stride by measuring step count, cadence, and foot strike. The socks send data to a phone, where you can view the metrics and analyze your form. sensoriafitness.com

BEST FOR: Data Geeks

4. Epson Runsense SF-810 \$350
If you're addicted to fitness data, this is your watch. It happily syncs with third-party apps via a nifty online tool, offers some of the best GPS tracking we've ever tested, and boasts an astonishing 20 hours of battery life—with the GPS on. The only caveat: the wrist-based LED heart-rate monitor isn't quite as accurate as those on other top-flight watches. epson.com

| 5



| 6



BEST FOR: Serious Training

5. Garmin Forerunner 225 \$300
Combine the 225's superb built-in heart-rate monitor—which proved as accurate as a chest strap—with Garmin's precise navigation and ten-hour battery life in GPS mode, and you have the perfect wearable for long days in the woods sans phone. The native apps track activity, but we found the 225 too clunky for daily wear. garmin.com

BEST FOR: Triathletes

6. Suunto Ambit3 Run \$299
The Ambit3 has a sleek display and a stable of cool features. We especially like the midrun access to lap comparisons and the recovery advice based on metrics. Multisport athletes will appreciate its ability to measure cycling speed and cadence. Even better, it can share that data with many popular apps. suunto.com



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Upgrade: WINTER HIKERS

| 1



The Durand Polar's insulation is made from bamboo charcoal, which **retains heat and absorbs odor.**

| 2



TOUGHER THAN TOUGH ENOUGH

Boots get *lighter, stronger, and warmer*

BY BERNE BROUDY

BEST FOR: Moving Fast

1. Hoka Tor Ultra Hi WP \$230

The rockered Tor Ultra looks like a midcut waterproof hiker but feels like a running shoe with ankle support. Hoka balanced the plush cushioning with a deep, stable heel pocket. The leather and nylon-mesh upper isn't insulated, but the boot's waterproof eVent liner did a good job keeping out snow. hokaoneone.com

BEST FOR: Big Hikes

2. Keen Durand Polar \$200

Inside the Durand Polar, 400 grams of proprietary insulation and a waterproof-breathable membrane surround your foot, while a wool footbed further boosts warmth. The beefy upper and sturdy toe bumper resist scrapes and scuffs. Said one tester: "My go-to for bagging peaks with long approaches." keenfootwear.com

| 3



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BEST FOR: Arctic Conditions

3. Muck Boot Pursuit Shadow \$220

The fleece-lined Pursuit Shadow combines layers of flexible foam insulation with a cushy EVA midsole, so it can handle temperatures down to 20 below. A rubber scaffold around the upper boosts stability without adding heft, resulting in a boot that clocks in at just 1.3 pounds. muckboots.com

BEST FOR: Après Adventures

4. Forsake Lockout \$140

When all you need is a wee bit of extra warmth to combat shoulder-season chill, the Lockout sneaker-boot has you covered. Made in collaboration with Woolrich, this waterproof-breathable shoe pairs a wool liner with a shock-absorbing footbed and EVA midsole that feels like something you'd find on a trainer. forsake.com

| 5



| 6



BEST FOR: Cool Runners

5. Adidas Outdoor Terrex Ultimate Boost \$200

The Terrex Ultimate Boost is the shoe we reached for when we wanted speed. The midsole is made of thousands of tiny plastic balls, instead of the typical compressible foam, for better cushion and energy return. And 200-gram PrimaLoft insulation in the waterproof upper kept us toasty even on below-freezing days. adidas.com

BEST FOR: Urban Winters

6. Lowa Glasgow GTX \$250

The waterproof Glasgow GTX has a wool and polyester fleece liner to combat frigid mornings and a contrast-stitched full-grain leather outer for timeless style. The boot's gusseted tongue keeps out snow, while the low-profile, sneakerlike sole has enough lugs to hold fast on slick sidewalks. lowaboos.com

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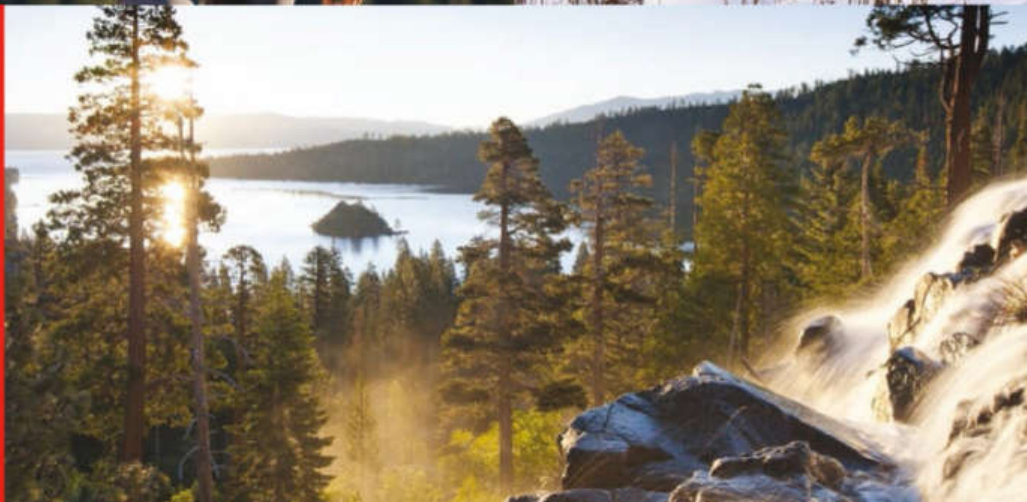


MOLO HYBRID JACKET

Travis Ganong - U.S. Ski Team Member
Lake Tahoe, California



HIGHSIERRA.COM



Upgrade: HOME GYM

NO MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED

Train your way through the dark months

BY CHRIS COHEN

1. Outdoor Voices Runningman sweatpants \$100

The spandex blend and sharp tailoring make the Runningman perfect for yoga, the climbing gym, or brunch. outdoorvoices.com

2. STI RumbleRoller foam roller \$70

The RumbleRoller looks like a medieval torture device, and it's indeed about as aggressive as foam

rollers come. Use it to improve blood flow on recovery days. rumbleroller.com

3. Beastmaker 1000 Series hang board \$99

A hang board is the perfect tool to get world-destroying fingers. The Beastmaker's two huge jugs are placed for pull-ups, knee raises, and endless dead hangs, and a good mix of edges,

slopers, and pockets will work your grip. beastmaker.co.uk

4. Nike Dri-Fit Cool Stripe Tailwind Crew shirt \$55

The polyester wicks sweat, it has a hip pocket and a loop on the collar to keep headphones in place, and it looks pretty cool, too. nike.com

5. Adidas Adipure 360.3 trainers \$90

Running shoes are for running. For anything else, you'll want the added all-around support of trainers. The 360.3

locks in your feet with a socklike mesh upper that's substantial but stretchy. It flexes during agility drills but stays planted for squats. adidas.com

6. SPRI kettlebell \$23 and up

You can work your whole body with a series of swings, squats, and presses. The SPRI is swathed in protective vinyl, so it won't ding your wood floors, and it looks good enough that you won't have to hide it in the closet when it's not in use. spri.com

7. Sony SRS-X5 Bluetooth speaker \$200

The 20-watt SRS-X5 pairs with Bluetooth devices like your phone or laptop, and it pumps out way more sound than its small size might suggest. sony.com

8. Rx jump rope \$43 and up

As with bikes, skis, and surfboards, you want a jump rope that fits. To that end, the Rx comes in 42 lengths and five weights. Pick one long enough so that the handles reach

the middle of your chest when the rope is halved. rxsmartgear.com

9. TRX Tactical Gym suspension straps \$249

TRX straps help you develop balance, flexibility, and a strong core with simple bodyweight exercises—in other words, everything you want from a workout. The top-of-the-line Tactical Gym gives you lots of mounting options and includes a 12-week training plan. trxtraining.com



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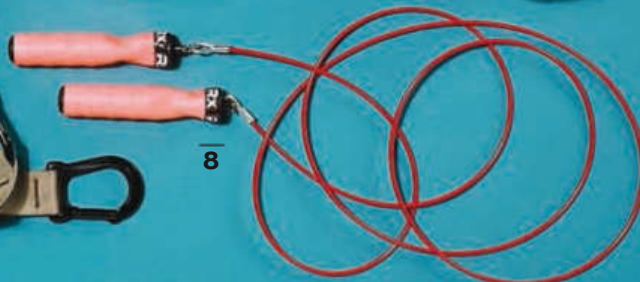
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KNOW THYSELF

Smarter, lighter, better-looking wearables to track your data

BY MICHAEL FRANK

BEST FOR: Ditching Your Phone

1. Garmin Vivoactive \$250

This slim, attractive unit has sport-specific functions for activity tracking and an on-board GPS to measure distance and elevation. It works with both Bluetooth and ANT+ devices—like a heart-rate monitor (\$50) or cadence sensor—and (swimmers, take note) is water-resistant down to 164 feet. The Garmin Connect Mobile app archives your data and can sync with various health platforms, including Garmin Connect and Apple Health. garmin.com

BEST FOR: Playing Nice with Everything

2. Pebble Time \$199

Meet the best Pebble yet. The Time is 20 percent thinner than the original, can go swimming, lasts seven days between charges, and works with every fitness app we've ever used. Like the Apple Watch, it comes with an accelerometer (but no heart-rate monitor) to gather data like speed and calories burned. Our main complaint: it has only 64 kilobytes of memory, which translates to fewer onboard features. getpebble.com

BEST FOR: Wearing All Day, Every Day

3. Apple Watch \$349

This is the only wearable we actually want to put on each morning. It's comfortable, looks great, and nails tracking basics with an accelerometer and a built-in heart-rate monitor that measures your pulse at your wrist. During training it gives heart rate and calories burned and, after a couple of runs with your iPhone, learns how to calculate pace and distance. (The Watch doesn't have a GPS.) When you're at work, a gentle buzz reminds you to stand if you've been idle too long. Note: it needs an iPhone to run third-party fitness apps. apple.com

BEST FOR: Multisport Athletes

4. Magellan Echo Fit \$130

Lightweight and inexpensive, the playful Echo Fit essentially acts as a wrist-based shell for 14 popular fitness apps, including MapMyRun, RunKeeper, Strava, and Wahoo Fitness. Paired with a smartphone, the watch displays metrics like speed, distance, calories burned, and heart rate. It tracks sleep patterns, too, and unlike the Apple and the Pebble, it takes a standard coin-cell battery, so it doesn't need constant recharging. Downsides: there's no GPS, and a heart-rate monitor isn't included (though you can get a chest strap for an extra \$50). magellangps.com

Essentials: FUEL

FILL 'ER UP

Stay energized, last longer

BY MATT SKENAZY

1. Munk Pack Oatmeal

Fruit Squeeze \$2.50

Squeeze packs are hot right now. But while most taste like a smoothie gone awry, this one blends fruit and oats into a satisfying treat. It didn't freeze during a winter camping trip at 12,000 feet, though 100 calories per pack meant we had to eat four at a time. munkpack.com

Created by pro cyclists and power couple Ally Stacher and John Murphy, the Ally's Bar is **gluten- and GMO-free**. It also contains a respectable 250 calories.

2. Ally's Bar \$4

Made from sweet potatoes and dates, Ally's Bars provide both immediate juice and a long-lasting IV drip of mojo. Our only complaint: just one flavor, which also features cranberries and chocolate. allysbar.com

3. Perfect Bar \$3

On dawn-patrol skins, when we need to fit breakfast in our pockets, we always go for Perfect's Almond Butter bar. Sweetened with honey and made from gluten-free and mostly organic ingredients, it has 13 grams of protein, 18 grams of fat, and 300 calories—a combination that keeps us feeling full longer. And there's something refreshing about an energy bar that spoils unless it's stored in the fridge. perfectbar.com

4. Setton Farms Premium Dark Chocolate Pistachios \$6

Chocolate is chock full of antioxidants, reduces inflammation, and improves cardiovascular health. Pistachios are brimming with heart-healthy fatty acids and more protein than either almonds or walnuts. More important, when you combine the two, the result is delicious. settonfarms.com

5. GoMacro MacroBar \$3

GoMacro bars are based on a macrobiotic diet, which prioritizes veggies and grains over animal products. Result: a rich snack made mostly of nut butter or brown-rice syrup that crams up to 290 calories into a package smaller than a Snickers. There are 11 flavors to choose from, but our favorite is the one filled with chocolate chips and sweet organic peanut butter. gomacro.com

6. Stumptown Chocolate

Cold Brew Coffee with Milk \$4

Chocolate milk, with its high carb-to-protein ratio, has long been lauded as an ideal recovery drink. Now new research shows that ingesting caffeine after exercise helps replenish glycogen stores. Stumptown pairs the two in this cold brew, creating our favorite new post-workout elixir. coldbrew.com



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| 1



BULK UP

Fatties are diversifying and maturing

BY AARON GULLEY

BEST FOR: Fat Bikers in Skin Suits

Specialized S-Works Fatboy

Carbon \$7,500

The Fatboy feels as if it came straight from Specialized's road-racing department. It's made from snappy molded carbon, and the cables are all routed internally. At just 23 pounds, it's lighter than most hard-tails with tires less than half the size of its 4.6-inch-wide treads. The rest is a study in minimalism: the 85-millimeter Hed carbon rims are tougher than their 15.7-ounce weight would suggest; the stripped-down Race Face Next SL crank is one of the lightest 1x11 options available; and ample front-tire clearance makes the brawny fork look svelte. Two models with budget-conscious components go for \$6,000 and \$3,200, respectively. specialized.com

| 2



BEST FOR: Crushing the Elements

Reeb Reebdonkadonk ABT \$6,200

Created by the guys at Oskar Blues—the Longmont, Colorado, brewery that deals in small-batch singlespeeds on the side—the Reebdonkadonk is the burliest fat bike we've ever ridden. It's constructed of lightweight, American-made OX Platinum steel, with wide-diameter tubes for stiffness. Ours ran on a Gates Carbon Drive and Rohloff internal hub, both of which proved virtually impervious to mud and snow. And with a gear range as big as a triple mountain bike's, the Rohloff was good for crawling up even the steepest pitches despite the bike's hefty 34 pounds. Meanwhile, the KS Suspension Lev dropper post, 800-millimeter-wide bars, and 4.8-inch Surly tires made technical descents nearly as easy as on a long-travel, full-suspension ride. When it comes to pure fun, versatility, and bling factor, not many bikes can out-donk this Reeb. reebcycles.com

| 3



BEST FOR: Versatility

Trek Farley 9.8 \$4,800

Trek upgraded its Farley from 26-inch wheels to a more versatile 27.5, claiming they make the bike roll faster and easier. The four-inch Bontrager tires mounted tubeless on the carbon Trek wheels *did* feel quick and responsive, both cruising along snowy roads and smashing down midwinter singletrack. But thanks to Trek's sliding dropouts, you can run everything from the fattest 26-inch wheels to 29ers, making this perhaps the most adaptable fat bike on the market. The cost stays low(er) because of SRAM's X1 drivetrain, which has the simplicity of a single-ring setup while still weighing less than anything with a front derailleur. And while the carbon frame looks surprisingly similar to the Specialized's, the price tag makes the Farley more attainable. trekbikes.com

ENTER THE PAIN CAVE

With the right gear, it's actually fun
BY AARON GULLEY

1. Bkool Smart Pro trainer \$700

The cyclist's answer to the Wii, the Bkool lets you ride more than 500,000 routes, in video view or with computer-generated 3-D graphics, while your home computer adjusts the resistance to match the visuals. The \$15 monthly subscription includes a virtual-competition option for real-time racing against up to 100 other Bkool users worldwide. bkool.com

2. CycleOps Training Mat \$75

Keep your trainer in place and your floors free of sweat with this hard vinyl mat. Downstairs neighbors and your significant other will appreciate its noise-dampening qualities at 6 A.M. cycleops.com

3. Pearl Izumi P.R.O. In-R-Cool shorts \$150

Bibs are too hot to wear indoors, and many shorts come with thin pads that aren't built for long training sessions. But a seamless chamois keeps these Pearls comfy for hours. pearlizumi.com

4. Rapha B&O H6 headphones \$430

The best way to block out the trainer drone? A pair of these Bang and Olufsen headphones, with pads made from the same soft leather (from African hair sheep) used in Rapha's GT gloves, inner fabric from the company's Pro Team jacket, and the requisite pink touches. rapha.cc

5. Lezyne Super GPS computer \$200

This ANT+ and Bluetooth Smart-enabled cycling computer has all the metrics you need for training, including heart rate, cadence, and power, but it costs a fraction of what the competition will run you. The

matchbox-size Super also has GPS for recording your rides outside. lezyne.com

6. 4iiii Innovations Precision power meter \$400

Swap the 4iiii for your left crank, pair it to your head unit, and say hello to data-driven training—and improved results. Bonus: it costs a tenth of what power meters did a decade ago. 4iiii.com

7. Infinit Repair recovery drink \$3.25 per serving

Replenishing your body immediately after an effort is as important as the workout itself, and Infinit's blend of protein and carbs is an easy way to top up those glycogen stores. When mixed with almond or coconut milk, it's as good as a chocolate shake. infinitnutrition.us

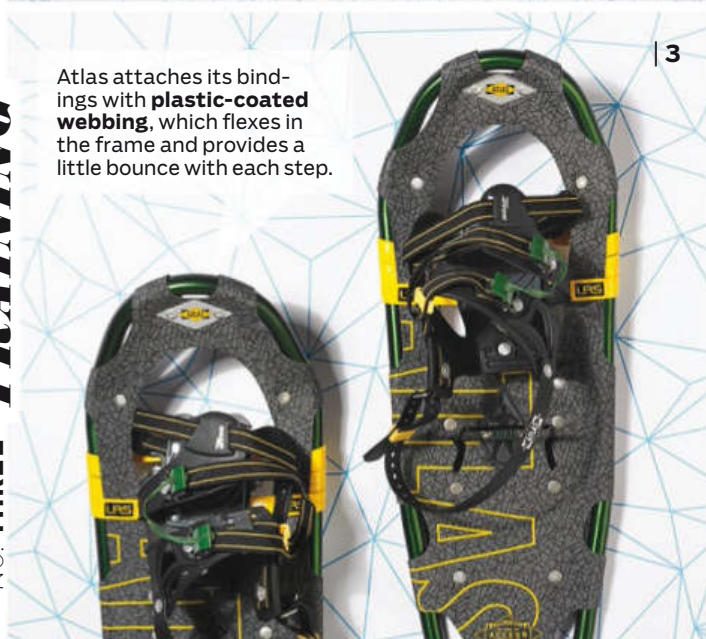
8. Giro Grynd shoes \$100

Stop scratching your floors and pilling the carpets. Slip into these spin-specific cleats, with a stiff SPD system set into a non-marking sole. giro.com

The Bkool folds at the middle, taking up only the space of a packed camp chair when not in use.



Field Tested: SNOWSHOES



Atlas attaches its bindings with **plastic-coated webbing**, which flexes in the frame and provides a little bounce with each step.

RISE ABOVE

More float and less weight make it easier than ever to head for the hills BY BERNE BROUDY

BEST FOR: Deep Powder

1. Fimbulvetr Rangr \$299
Designed in Norway, the Rangr has about 50 percent more float than any other shoe we tested. Credit the 11-inch-wide molded-plastic deck, which is reminiscent of the wood and gut snowshoes trappers used to wear. "On mellow grades in deep snow, they're the best shoe you can buy," said one tester. The simple webbing-and-plastic binding is easy to use and extremely durable, but on steep inclines we wanted a heel crampon for better purchase. 4.9 lbs; fimbulvetr.no

BEST FOR: All Conditions

2. Tubbs Boundary Peak \$250
Named in honor of one of Maine's tallest mountains, the aluminum-frame Boundary Peak looks antique, with its denim-textured flexible deck and leather patches. But it's loaded with cutting-edge innovations, including a binding you can release with one hand, a pull-to-lock heel strap, and a rotating toe piece that sheds snow. The toe and heel crampons are aggressive but not overkill. 4.5 lbs; tubbs snowshoes.com

BEST FOR: Big Objectives

3. Atlas Access \$180
The Access is light enough for full-on expedition days but offers the stability required for sketchy, exposed trails. A flexing frame kept testers' feet in contact with the ground, and the redesigned binding, which lets the tail drop with each step, didn't kick up snow. Claw points are filed flat enough that we didn't feel unbalanced even when the powder was sparse, and the blunt crampons were plenty aggressive for a midwinter summit of Mount Marcy, New York's highest peak. The heel risers did an admirable job of keeping our calves from cramping. 4 lbs; atlassnowshoe.com

BEST FOR: Running

4. TSL Symbioz Racing \$199
The 11-ounce Symbioz is the bendiest snowshoe we tested, flexing to match the terrain for full contact with the snow. Four studs in the base boost footing on hardpack, and a matrix of molded traction bars under the ball of your foot and around the perimeter of the shoe give you even more grip, with negligible added weight. (The Symbioz is at least a pound lighter than every other shoe on this page.) The toe binding fits sneakers and low-profile boots but is supportive enough to keep your foot stable. "I ran on packed trails like it was pavement," said one tester. 1.4 lbs; tsloutdoor.com

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GLIDE RIGHT

The ultimate cross-training kit

BY MARC PERUZZI

1. Louis Garneau

Alpha vest \$160

The Alpha's asymmetrical zipper won't rub on your chin, and the form-fitting athletic cut won't impede movement or catch the wind in a tuck. louisgarneau.com

2. Swix Down

shorts \$90

These shorts are the winter equivalent of mountain-bike baggies: a functional statement piece. Keep them on while warming up, then zip them off when temps rise or it's time to go fast. swixsport.us

3. Madshus Nano

Carbon Race UHM

poles \$280

Stiff, lightweight poles are to nordic skiers what carbon wheels are to cyclists. The Nanos let you quicken your poling cadence, adding power to push. madshus.com

4. Swix Carbon

jacket \$199

The Carbon is one of the most versatile tops ever made. Essentially a simple full-zip shirt, it has enough wind blocking to protect you during chilly descents, while still being plenty breathable for hard efforts. swixsport.us

5. Craft Storm

tights \$125

These tights are purpose-built for cross-country. The cut won't hinder your diagonal stride, and the DWR-treated stormproof fabric up front protects you in wet squalls. craftsports.us

6. Helly Hansen

Softshell

Smartgloves \$45

We like these gloves for their dexterity and lack of insulation, which means our hands never overheat. Plus, the neoprene cuff and water-repellant shell keep out wet, sloppy snow. hellyhansen.com

7. Fischer RC7

boots \$200

The race scene drives nordic gear, which means solid trickle-down. The RC7 has an anatomically snug speed-lace system, thermo-fit sole, and well-crafted internal heel cups—features that let recreational skiers leave the shop with a competition-ready boot. fischer-sports.com

8. Salomon Escape

beanie \$27

Your alpine ski hat is too thick, but a cycling beanie is too thin (plus, no pompom). Cross-country skiing requires a simple, breathable acrylic cap like this one from Salomon, which kept our ears warm (but not too warm) and comfortable while doing intervals on the track. salomon.com

9. Julbo Sniper

sunglasses \$150

Nothing about the Sniper says casual skiing. The styling is classic 1980s Euro, and you can flip the lens up if you need to shoot at something (like a biathlon target). Bonus points: the high-contrast, polarized Zebra Light Fire lens offers goggle-quality optics. julbousa.com

10. Rossignol

R-Skin skis \$405

The R-Skin is part of a new breed of fast, high-end classic skis built around mohair skin inserts. Beyond occasionally waxing the glide zones, there's no upkeep. Leave them in storage until conditions look good, then step in and go. Replace the inserts after 100 days of use. rossignol.com

LIGHTEN UP

© Michael Reusse



Freerider Pro 30

Freerider Pro 28SL

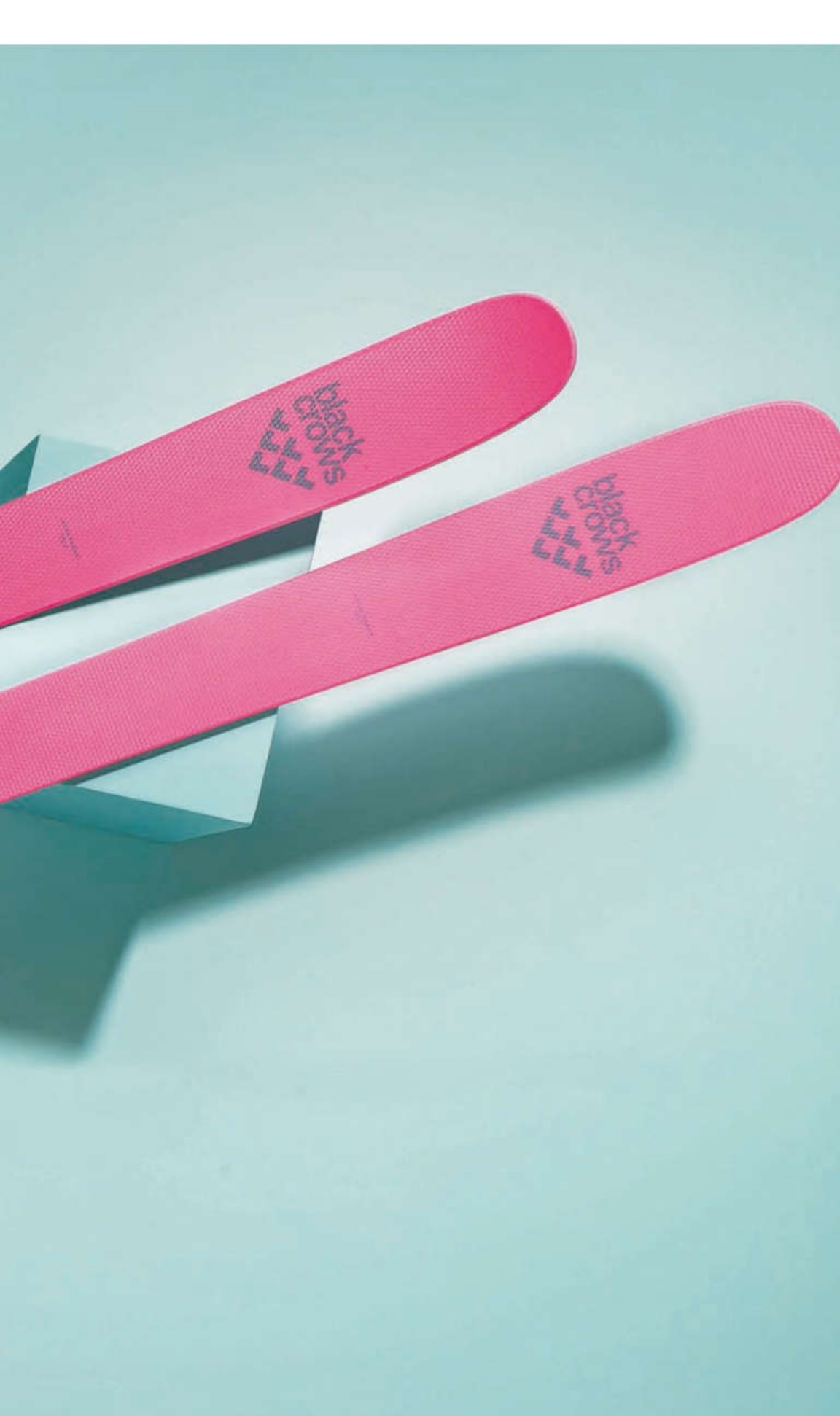
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NATURAL SELECTION

Alpine-touring equipment continues to evolve

BY ADAM HOWARD,
LUCY HIGGINS, AND
TYLER COHEN

Backcountry gear is getting really damn good. So good, in fact, that it's time to ditch your dedicated alpine setup if you make any turns on the other side of the ropes. Take boots: even models from traditional alpine companies are getting lighter, and they perform almost as well as their resort-bound siblings. Skis are shedding ounces, too, with clever carbon constructions and skinnier waists. But they still shred. In tech bindings, the concept that Dynafit pioneered 31 years ago has become a ubiquitous platform for others to build upon, and the results are safer and more user-friendly. To help you pick the perfect kit, we tested 207 products and then narrowed the field to the 13 most exciting.

GEAR OF THE YEAR

Black Crows Corvus Freebird \$840

Black Crows, based in Chamonix, France, has a reputation for building powerful freeride skis. But its boards weren't light enough for touring—until now. The Corvus has the heart of a big-mountain charger and the backcountry chops of a lighter ski, with a carbon-fiberglass layer under a wood core. The subtle “beak and a half” profile pairs rocker up front with a more traditional (albeit still turned-up) tail for edge hold. “Precise and multifunctional,” said one tester. At 8.5 pounds, it's heavy for big tours, but that's a small price to pay for superb downhill performance. 139/109/122; 8.5 lbs; black-crows.com

TOURABILITY: 3

POWER: 5

[OUT OF 5]



1. DPS Wailer 99

Tour1 skis \$1,050

BEST FOR: Turning the mountain into a snowy playground.

THE TEST: It's a full 15 percent lighter than its predecessor, but the 2016 Wailer 99 still shines on the descents. Credit the new Tour1 engineering, which combines ounce-saving cap construction (the company's other skis have sidewalls) with aerospace-grade carbon around a featherweight balsa core. It remained stable and damp even in tricky spring conditions, while rocker in the tip and tail kept it quick and playful. With a wider 99-millimeter waist, it floated a bit better in the deep stuff than the La Sportiva. "Probably the most fun I've had on a DPS," said one tester.

THE VERDICT: Now even lighter, the supremely capable Wailer 99 will have you whooping with joy. 125/99/111; 6.2 lbs; dpsskis.com
TOURABILITY: 4.5
POWER: 3.5

2. Dynafit Radical

FT 2.0 bindings \$650

BEST FOR: Skiers who want a smoother ride.

THE TEST: The Radical 2.0's turntable toe takes the edge off hard, unpredictable snow. Testers found it more elastic and forgiving than its competitors. "Feels natural when skiing fast in tough conditions," one tester said. The 2.0 also has a true forward-pressure setting that reduces the chance of prerelease (a weakness of the original). Simply put, it instills plenty of confidence when you're pointing down the fall line.

THE VERDICT: A tad heavier but much more reliable than its predecessor. Sets a new standard for tech bindings. 2.8 lbs; dynafit.com
TOURABILITY: 4.5
POWER: 4

3. La Sportiva Vapor

Svelte skis \$1,200

BEST FOR: Ski mountaineering.

THE TEST: Last year, La Sportiva changed how we think about ultralight, high-performance skis with the Vapor Nano, which layered woven Kevlar over carbon nanotubes for an unbeatable weight-to-surface-area ratio. The Vapor Svelte features the same technology—on a diet. At 96 millimeters underfoot, it's a good deal narrower than the Nano, and it has slightly less tip rocker. The result: the best option for going fast uphill, then powering back down. "Superlight, but with guts and a backbone," one tester said. "It's more confident in crud than many skis with wider waists."

THE VERDICT: Astonishingly impressive on the downhill given its weight. 126/96/113; 4.6 lbs; sportiva.com
TOURABILITY: 5
POWER: 3

4. G3 Ion

bindings \$600

BEST FOR: Newbie tech-binding buyers.

THE TEST: The user-friendly Ion returns for the second year in a row technically unchanged, with easy step-in and intuitive heel risers. But skiers now have three options to choose from: the lightweight Ion 10; the even more lithe Ion LT (a brakeless option for the weight-conscious crowd); and the burly Ion 12 (shown here), which features brakes, a release value to 12 for all-mountain versatility, and a forged-aluminum body for impressive strength. "Looks elegant, skis elegant," as one of our testers put it.

THE VERDICT: A sturdy binding that comes in three flavors. 1.3 lbs; genuineguidegear.com
TOURABILITY: 4.5
POWER: 3.5

1. K2 Pinnacle**95 skis** \$850**BEST FOR:** Going fast no matter the conditions.

THE TEST: K2 built its new line of mountain freeride skis to rip downhill. A metal laminate parallels the edges of the composite core, making for superb stability and energy transfer at high speeds—albeit with a small weight penalty. Combine that construction with long, gradual tip rocker and light tail rocker, and you get a narrow board that blasts through crud, carves down ice, and surfs surprisingly well in deep powder. Testers called it nimble, speedy, and “a highly tuned thoroughbred” of a board. Unless you ski powder every day (and you don’t), this could be the only ski you need.

THE VERDICT: Performs brilliantly on both sides of the ropes. 132/95/115; 7.8 lbs; k2skis.com
VERSATILITY: 4.5
POWER: 4.5

2. Marker Kingpin**13 bindings** \$649**BEST FOR:** Replacing your alpine setup.

THE TEST: One of the few DIN- and ISO-certified tech options on the market, the Kingpin releases just like an alpine binding in back, thanks to the wide heelpiece. It’s also easier to get into and out of than its true tech competitors. Six springs in the toe (instead of the usual four) gave testers more confidence skiing and hucking at speed. And while it’s heavier than your standard tech binding, it’s also much burlier. One tester called its performance “on par with alpine bindings. Just bomber.”

THE VERDICT: Unmatched power and safety—at a price. 3.2 lbs; markerusa.com
TOURABILITY: 3.5
POWER: 4.5

3. Dynastar Cham**2.0 97 skis** \$700**BEST FOR:** Smearing buttery turns.

THE TEST: This year, Dynastar traded the metal in its Cham for a paulownia-wood core, which offers a lighter, more forgiving ride. It also reduced the amount of tip rocker, to give the ski more control at speed, and added rocker to the tail, to make executing lively turns even easier. Quick and springy underfoot, it’s ideal for the skier seeking soft snow and spring corn. Take note: at 7.5 pounds, it’s best suited to short tours close to the resort, not all-day backcountry adventures.

THE VERDICT: This playful yet stable ski is back and better than ever. 133/97/113; 7.5 lbs; dynastar.com
VERSATILITY: 4
POWER: 4

4. 22 Designs Outlaw**NTN bindings** \$400**BEST FOR:** Telemarkers seeking ultimate power.

THE TEST: This is the latest addition to 22 Designs’ gang of stainless-steel (read: nearly indestructible) telemark bindings. It’s also the company’s first NTN offering, which means it’s step-in and compatible with NTN-specific boots from Crispi, Scarpa, and Scott. Maintaining the brand’s hard-charging pedigree, the Outlaw has a six-hole mounting pattern for better grip on your ski, custom spring-tension settings, and 50 degrees of free pivot in walk mode. “Old-school tele feel with the stiffness of NTN,” one tester said.

THE VERDICT: All the power and edge hold of NTN from a performance leader. 3.5 lbs; twentytwodesigns.com
TOURABILITY: 3.5
POWER: 4.5



**1. Blizzard Zero G****108 skis** \$960**BEST FOR:** Doing it all.

THE TEST: The widest ski in Blizzard's new Zero G line, the 108 is neither the lightest nor the hardest-charging ski we tested. But it might be the perfect compromise. The paulownia core and carbon-fiber frame matched with a fairly wide waist and early rise had testers raving about the floaty ride in powder. On icy steepes, it held its edge and carved quick turns, with traditional camber underfoot and sidewall construction. It sailed through variable conditions, too, with embedded carbon from tip to tail dampening vibrations through chunder.

THE VERDICT: The best performance-to-weight ratio here. 136/108/122; 7.3 lbs; blizzard-ski.com
TOURABILITY: 4.5
POWER: 4

2. Salomon Guardian**MNC 13 bindings** \$450**BEST FOR:** Resort skiers who dabble in touring.

THE TEST: Widely regarded as the best frame binding on the market, the Guardian (identical to the Atomic Tracker, just with different paint) returns unchanged this season. With a maximum DIN of 13, it's built for big, bold descents, but take note: it will inflict suffering on the way back up, given its weight—about double the next heaviest binding on this page. But when it comes to easy operation (a flick of the pole puts it in walk mode) and compatibility (it works with most boot soles—AT, alpine, or Walk to Ride), the Guardian can't be beat.

THE VERDICT: Does everything an alpine binding does, with the added option of touring. 6.4 lbs; salomon.com
TOURABILITY: 2.5
POWER: 5

3. Armada**KUFO 103 skis** \$775**BEST FOR:** Going from powder to crud.

THE TEST: The new KUFO is the same width as last year's, but it's 16 percent lighter, with nary a drop in downhill performance. The board's caruba-wood core makes for a buoyant ride, while carbon and Kevlar throughout give it crud-busting stability. Armada kept almost everything else the same, including the early rise and camber underfoot, which contributes to its playfulness, and a flat tail for driving turns. "Kudos to Armada for making a ski that both surfs and rails," one tester said.

THE VERDICT: A powerhouse all-mountain option, now lighter and with more float. 119/102/123; 7 lbs; armadaskis.com
TOURABILITY: 4
POWER: 4

4. Dynafit Beast 14 bindings \$750**BEST FOR:** The hardest chargers.

THE TEST: The Beast 14 uses the same turntable-toe technology as Dynafit's Radical 2.0 (page 102) and the same heelpiece as the Beast 16. The result: a binding that smooths out harsh bumps, locks your boot in place, and releases safely in a crash. Oh yeah, it's also about a third of a pound lighter than the 16 without sacrificing downhill performance. We do have two complaints: AT boots must be modified with a metal heel fitting (included) to be compatible, and there's no zero-degree option in tour mode for the flats.

THE VERDICT: Best-in-class downhill performance with some touring limitations. 3.5 lbs; dynafit.com
TOURABILITY: 3.5
POWER: 4.5

Field Tested: ALPINE TOURING SKI BOOTS

HAPPY FEET

Top performers for the ups and the downs

BEST FOR: Occasional Missions

1. **Tecnica Cochise Pro 130** \$840

The Cochise Pro 130 carries over the interchangeable tech- and DIN-compatible soles of last year's model but gets an upgraded liner. It remains a leader in the AT market, but due to its weight, it isn't ideal for big-mileage days. That said, if you put a premium on going downhill fast, it can't be beat. 8.9 lbs; tecnicausa.com

BEST FOR: Long Tours

2. **Scott Sports Superguide Carbon** \$1,000

To build this boot, Scott started with its Cosmos II, then added carbon to the lower shell for a lighter ride and better control on descents. It also embedded Gore-Tex into parts of the liner—which one tester called “plush but supportive”—to keep moisture off the skin. 6.2 lbs; scott-sports.com

BEST FOR: Randonee Racing

3. **Salomon MTN Lab** \$950

Designers of the MTN Lab had uphill in mind, incorporating numerous touring-friendly features like a lightweight shell, a high-traction sole, and 47 degrees of motion in an easy-to-activate walk mode. But this boot can charge, too, with a carbon spine, 120 flex, and the same snug, 98-millimeter last you'll find in Salomon's high-performance alpine-racing models. 7 lbs; salomon.com

BEST FOR: Living in Your Boots

4. **Dynafit Winter Guide GTX** \$700

Aside from a burlier top strap, the shell is identical to Dynafit's budget-friendly Neo PX, with a wide last, 18 degrees of forward lean, and three buckles, the top of which activates the 60-degree walk mode. But it's the inside that counts: the liner pairs perforations with Gore-Tex for breathability and waterproofness. 6.8 lbs; dynafit.com

BEST FOR: Big Lines

5. **Lange XT 130** \$850

The XT 130 is back, with an overhauled walk mode that uses a full-metal locking mechanism for ripping downhill. But while testers agreed that the boot now skis like its alpine cousins, the new system doesn't improve walkability, despite the company's claims. Still, it'll get you to après in record time. 8.9 lbs; lange-boots.com

BEST FOR: Doing It All

6. **Scarpa Freedom RS** \$829

The new Freedom RS is like the old Freedom SL but with a few key updates, including a stiffer cuff for better control and 130 flex for powerful skiers. Add four buckles and a booster strap, and you've got “a boot capable of driving any ski,” as one very impressed tester put it. 8.8 lbs; scarpa.com





1



2

3



RACE TO THE TOP

Easier climbing equals more downhill
BY KYLE DICKMAN

1. Amplit Milligram splitboard \$1,100

At 5.5 pounds, this carbon board is light without sacrificing performance. The blunt nose gives it a surfy feel in powder, while the stiff core remains responsive even while riding icy late-season couloirs. amplit.com

2. Dakine Heli vest \$150

Ditch the pack in favor of the Heli. The slim 1.9-pound nylon top is chairlift-friendly and easily accommodates the essentials (shovel, beacon, and probe), plus an extra layer, snacks, and a one-liter bladder. dakine.com

3. Black Diamond Front Point bibs \$499

With full-length zippers, internal gaiters with boot hooks, and a pair of enormous thigh pockets, these Gore-Tex bibs breathe well in the uptrack and keep powder out on the descent. blackdiamondequipment.com

4. Deeluxe Spark XV boots \$359

These stiff boots have crampon-friendly soles, durable layers of rubber at high-wear spots, and a comfortable lace-and-strap fit system that adjusts the tightness of the heel, forefoot, and toe. deeluxe.com

5. Ride Snowboards Monthaven shell \$429

Sure, it has fully taped seams, a helmet-compatible hood, and burly zippers. But it's the highly breath-

able Cocona fabric and clever details like articulated elbows and extra-long pit zips that make this the ideal hard shell for long uphill slogs. ride-snowboards.com

6. Spark R&D Arc bindings \$385

This season's Arc uses a new single-wire heel riser—flip down for climbing the steep and up for the flats—and an injection-molded nylon heelpiece for improved board feel. sparkridd.com

7. G3 Alpinist High Traction skins \$210

To prevent these skins from losing their grip over time, G3 coated them with a proprietary long-lasting synthetic adhesive. Paired with adjustable tail clips, the high-traction Alpinists stick tight no matter what. genuineguidegear.com

8. Backcountry Access Scepter 4S poles \$120

These slick, lightweight, three-piece aluminum poles collapse to just over a foot long. Win. backcountryaccess.com

9. SmartWool PhD Spring gloves \$90

Smart splitboarders carry two types of gloves: a heavy pair for the ride down, and a light pair, like these, for the way up. The thin merino-blend lining and short cuff manage heat, while the goat-leather outer provides enough insulation for early-morning skins. smartwool.com



4



5



6



7



8



9

Use the **flat-edged scraper** on the Scepter's grip to clear snow buildup, and thus shed weight.

HESTRA



Narvik Collection

Preserving heritage.

Named for a small mining town in Norway, the new Narvik Wool Terry glove and mitt stay true to our Scandinavian heritage. Featuring eco-friendly vegetable-tanned goatskin leather, a removable wool terry/pile lining, and a waxed fabric finish, these styles are sure to become classics in a long line of Hestra favorites.

HESTRAGLOVES.COM

BRING ON THE
BLIZZARDS

*Shells get a major upgrade.
Again.* BY FREDERICK
REIMERS

There's been a lot of upheaval in this category recently. The race to create the lightest, most breathable—but still bomber—jacket has destroyed longstanding paradigms. The lines that once divided soft and hard shells have blurred so much, they're all but gone. Waterproof down has gone from pipe dream to commonplace, while new lightweight synthetic insulations keep you warm on the coldest days. Now, in another leap forward, mad-scientist engineers are using surprising new materials like corn (that's right, corn) and rain-shedding wool. The upshot? There are more high-quality jacket options than we ever thought possible.

GEAR OF
THE YEAR

**Outdoor Research
Uberlayer \$300**

Companies have tried for years to make a puffy you put on and keep on, whether you're at camp or on the hill. Patagonia pulled it off with the Nano-Air, a breathable insulator that won our Gear of the Year last season. Now OR has perfected the concept.

Filled with Polartec Alpha (made to keep U.S. Special Forces dry during combat), and wrapped in a cozy face fabric, the Uberlayer sheds snow and moves moisture away from the body. The best puffy here for high-output activity, it worked for all our winter pursuits, from skiing to hiking. Bonus: inside pockets swallow gloves and a hat. 1.2 lbs; outdoorresearch.com

BREATHABILITY: 5
WEATHERPROOFNESS: 3
[OUT OF 5]





Introducing the Mission Shell
Engineered with GORE-TEX®



 **Black Diamond**

BlackDiamondEquipment.com



JACKETS

Patagonia Refugative \$499**BEST FOR:** Going fast and far.

THE TEST: You're moving constantly in the backcountry, which means your shell spends most of its time in a pack. Read: you want it to be as light as possible. Here, it's tough to beat the Refugative. Cut from Gore's svelte new C-Knit-backed fabric, this minimalist jacket weighs less than a pound but still shields you in a storm and comes with niceties such as 14-inch-long pit zips and four roomy pockets. We pack it in our bag even on bluebird days as a barely-there insurance policy.

THE VERDICT: A sleek hard shell perfect for three-season use.

15 oz; patagonia.com

BREATHABILITY: 3

WEATHERPROOFNESS: 5



The Patagonia and Berghaus shells **ditch the powder skirt to save weight**. You can zip off the Dynafit's to do the same.

Dynafit Yotei GTX \$599**BEST FOR:** Ski touring.

THE TEST: The Yotei—made from the same high-end fabric as the Patagonia—is built specifically for people who log lots of miles on all-day ski tours. Hence backcountry-specific features like huge chest pockets that accommodate climbing skins while still playing nice with pack straps. Vents over the triceps dump heat in a hurry, and even though the removable powder skirt and stretchy wrist cuffs add a few ounces, we appreciated those extra features on the coldest, deepest days.

THE VERDICT: "The perfect backcountry ski shell," said one tester.

1.2 lbs; dynafit.com

BREATHABILITY: 3

WEATHERPROOFNESS: 5

**Berghaus Baffin Island** \$350**BEST FOR:** Multisport play.

THE TEST: Sure, the Baffin Island looks like your classic trim-cut European hard shell, but it's actually an extremely versatile layer suited to everything from ski touring to bike commuting. Stretchy fabric at the back and under the arms gives it the non-restrictive fit of a supple midlayer, while burly material at the shoulders and hips boosts durability without adding much weight. Berghaus nailed the details, too, including a drop hem that's long enough to keep you dry even running rainy-day errands on a bike.

THE VERDICT: A do-it-all mountain parka at a great price. 1.1 lbs;

berghaus.com

BREATHABILITY: 4

WEATHERPROOFNESS: 3

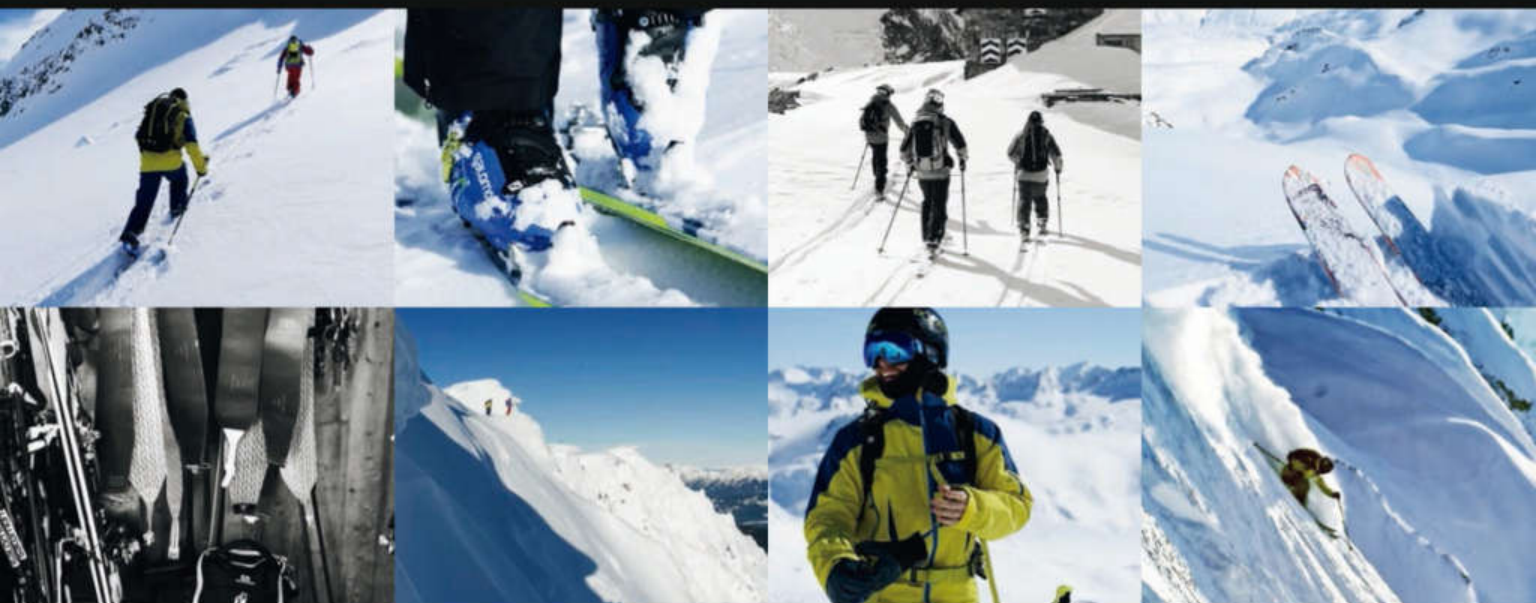
KILLER
VALUE

MOVE FREELY, EXPAND YOUR PLAYGROUND

The new freeride-touring benchmark combines ultra-light shell technology, superior range-of-motion, and the no compromise power and precision to take your skiing further.



#EXPANDYOURPLAYGROUND





On the Ortovox and North Face, snug hoods save weight and are **meant to fit under a helmet**.



The North Face Summit L3 \$350

BEST FOR: Extreme insulation without the weight penalty.

THE TEST: The 800-fill down L3 comes in well under a pound and scrunches down smaller than a grapefruit. Built with FuseForm, which combines various yarn types into a single material, it has fewer seams than its competitors, boosting durability while reducing weight. The fabric is three times as strong at the shoulders and hips as at the torso, making the L3 tough where you need it to be and breathable where you don't.

THE VERDICT: A gossamer hoodie you can't afford not to throw in a pack. 12.7 oz; thenorthface.com

BREATHABILITY: 4

WEATHERPROOFNESS: 2

Ortovox Piz Boe \$350

BEST FOR: High-output action.

THE TEST: In the ongoing arms race to make an insulator that keeps you warm (but not too warm) in wet conditions, Ortovox came up with a surprising weapon: corn. It filled the Piz Boe with an absorbent blend of wool and a cornstarch-based polymer. It sounds like a Shackleton survival strategy, but it works brilliantly. We stayed toasty even during a 38-degree run in the rain. The nylon shell is windproof, while stretchy merino panels on the arms keep this piece snug without inhibiting movement. Nice touch: the mesh-backed pockets do double-duty as chest vents.

THE VERDICT: Ideal for skiing, running, climbing, and biking in the sleet. 12.7 oz; ortovox.com

BREATHABILITY: 4

WEATHERPROOFNESS: 3

Voormi Fall Line \$399

BEST FOR: Wool lovers.

THE TEST: Most shells are content to sandwich a membrane between two pieces of fabric to keep out water. The Fall Line, on the other hand, uses Voormi's Core Construction technology, which weaves wool through a waterproof sheet. Result: a single-layer jacket with the wind- and snow-shielding abilities of a soft shell but the feel of fleece. The breathable top repelled sloppy cement, but without taped seams it didn't keep us dry in a downpour.

THE VERDICT: A surprisingly stylish high-performance piece. 1.8 lbs; voormi.com

BREATHABILITY: 4

WEATHERPROOFNESS: 3



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STITCH
FREE
CONSTRUCTION

WATERPROOF
GOOSE
FULLY SEAM
SEALED

RESPONSIBLY SOURCED
800+
FILL DOWN

THE FLOODLIGHT JACKET™

Keeping down insulation dry and functional can be a challenging endeavor in wet conditions. That's why we wrapped the 800+ fill goose down of the Floodlight Jacket in waterproof, breathable Pertex® Shield+ fabric. Our ingenious design ensures water *never* touches the down, completely blocks the wind and traps your body heat in even the most severe conditions. An ideal jacket for hiking, climbing or ski-touring in cold and wet environments, throwing on the Floodlight is a sure-fire way to stay warm and dry.

AVAILABLE FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN AT  **ALPEN**
AND SELECT OUTDOOR RESEARCH RETAILERS.

Field Tested: BASE AND MIDLAYERS

HOLD ME CLOSE

If it's next to skin, it had better be good

BY JOE JACKSON



1. Icebreaker Zone One Sheep Suit onesie \$200

Onesies bring out our inner kid. Plus they're warm and won't ride up under a shell. The hooded wool Sheep Suit is toasty yet breathable, with mesh under the arms and at the knees. When nature calls, just use the two-way zipper and fly—no disrobing necessary. icebreaker.com

2. Under Armour Charged Wool Trek 1/4 Zip shirt \$125

Built from Polartec's new Power Wool fabric, the Trek is good for everything from subfreezing tours to 60-degree hikes. The material layers wool under synthetic for the warmth-to-weight ratio of natural fibers and the wicking abilities of the man-made stuff. underarmour.com

3. The North Face Summit L1 pants \$125

Soft as cotton, stretchy as Lycra, and airy as polyester, the L1 is the Superman of the technical-tights world. The North Face achieved this feat by weaving different yarn types together to create a single, versatile fabric with just one seam running along the legs, plus a crotch gusset. Our only gripe? No fly. thenorthface.com



DOWNTEK
WATER REPELLENT FABRIC

Even four legged friends need a ride to the top every once in a while, cat-skiing near Crested Butte, CO – Braden Gunem

KEEP GETTING AFTER IT



Men's and Women's Shovelhead 700 Fill,
and Kid's Ice House Hoodie 650 Fill DownTek™ Jackets



**Outfitting Dirtbags
Everywhere...**

Insulated Apparel • Tents
Sleeping Bags • Pads



4. SmartWool Corbet 120 midlayer \$200

With the good looks of a retro sweater but the heart of a performance piece, the wool-insulated Corbet kept us warm on walks to the bar and days up on the hill. Wear it under a shell or as outerwear; its stretchy back panels vent heat. When the day's done, keep it on for rocking après. smartwool.com

5. CW-X StabilyX tights \$150

During testing, we found that compression tights like the StabilyX provided noticeable support to tired muscles on the trail. The price of all the reinforcement? This base layer runs hot, due to the thick fabric and crisscrossed compression bands, making it most comfortable on sub-45-degree days. cw-x.com

6. Patagonia Capilene Thermal Weight Zip-Neck shirt \$119

The Capilene line ditches the skintight nordic-racer fit in favor of a looser cut. We're happy to report that it still strikes a fantastic balance between warmth and breathability, thanks to the Polartec Power Grid fabric's soft, waffled fleece made with recycled materials. patagonia.com

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REFINED LOOKS, AND EXCEPTIONAL
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PROVEN PERFORMANCE WITH
PROGRESSIVE DESIGN AND
UNPARALLELED DURABILITY.

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WILL OUTLAST YOU.

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The new Gator Premium knives confirm a tradition of excellence. Designed and built in Portland, OR.
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STUFF SACKS

Better bags so you can go farther, faster, and safer

BY RYAN STUART

Packs keep getting lighter, smarter, and easier to use. We ran 18 new models through the wringer, and almost every one made the final round. But while it's easy to find a great pack, choosing the perfect one still requires careful consideration. For starters, standard or airbag equipped? If you spend more than ten days a year in avalanche-prone terrain, consider an airbag. Next there's size. As a general rule, opt for 15 liters or smaller if you're riding lifts, 15 to 25 for sidecountry adventures, 25 to 45 for day trips, and 45 or more for multi-day missions. Finally, do you want lots of pockets or a sleek top-loader? Your answers will lead you to a bag you'll love—and use.

GEAR OF THE YEAR

**The North Face
Snomad 34** \$159

We knew we'd found the winner when our most demanding tester came back with nothing but compliments. Here are a few: "A plethora of well-placed pockets," referring to the fleecy goggle holder and tool and hip storage. "The back-entry zippers are the cat's meow"—they open the body wide, so the contents are easy to see. Full, the pack sits lightly, with soft padding throughout, compression straps to reduce jostling, and rigid stays to distribute the load. He loved the climbing-specific details, too: lots of clearance for looking up a route with a helmet on and room for a harness and crampons. "The perfect day-tripper," he concluded. 2.8 lbs; thenorthface.com
CARRY COMFORT: 4
FUNCTION: 5
[OUT OF 5]



X-TRAIN LITE



CLARK

THROTTLE



APOLLO



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WHEREVER YOU ROAM, WHATEVER
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TO CARRY AND PROTECT WHATEVER
YOU'RE MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT.

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Mountain Hardware

SnoJo 20 \$100

BEST FOR: Playing close to the lifts.
THE TEST: The SnoJo falls into that small class of packs that feel just fine on chairlifts but have enough hauling capacity for sidecountry laps. Testers loved the big handle on the back, which made it easy to carry onto chairs, as well as the wide and comfortable shoulder straps. A back zip opens the pack for easy sorting of essentials, the tool pocket holds large shovel blades, and retention loops check dangling straps. Smart: the ski- and board-carry system can also be used to compress the bag when hauling smaller loads.

THE VERDICT: A clean carrier for missions just outside the resort gates. 1.9 lbs; mountainhardware.com
 CARRY COMFORT: 4 / FUNCTION: 4.5



Deuter Rise Tour 45+ \$195

BEST FOR: Long weekend tours.
THE TEST: Pack right and a 45-liter rucksack is an ideal weekender. But snow camping? That's where the "+" comes in. With all your avy gear in a dedicated pocket, goggles and other essentials stashed in the brain, and skins in the zippered side sleeves, the Rise Tour's cavernous main compartment is left open for a whole lotta love. "It swallows an amazing amount of gear while remaining comfortable to carry," said one tester. Props go to the floating lid and extendable skirt, which make space for at least five extra liters' worth of gear.

THE VERDICT: A well-balanced and comfortable pack that plays big. 4 lbs; deuter.com
 CARRY COMFORT: 5 / FUNCTION: 4



Jones Minimalist 35 \$149

BEST FOR: Splitboard touring.
THE TEST: The Minimalist was built to the only-if-I-really-need-it specifications of company founder and backcountry-snowboarding icon Jeremy Jones. At 2.4 pounds, this top loader is the lightest pack by volume (35 liters) that we tested this season. But despite the bare minimum of appointments, testers didn't find it lacking. "It's somehow also packed with smart little features," said one. Examples: two pockets on the hips, a split top pocket, and a mesh helmet holder that works well even if you're postholing with a board strapped vertically or A-frame style.

THE VERDICT: No frills, no problem. 2.4 lbs; jonessnowboards.com
 CARRY COMFORT: 4 / FUNCTION: 4

The Minimalist has a **removable lid**, so you can shed weight and bulk for quick trips.

K2 BackSide Float 8 \$500**BEST FOR:** Downhill junkies.

THE TEST: Don't plan to go far with the Float 8. Though it looks like a 20-liter pack, with airbag and cylinder in place there's barely room for a shovel, a probe, water, and a layer. It worked perfectly while boot-packing Terminator Ridge at British Columbia's Kicking Horse, where we strapped our skis vertically and still managed to secure a helmet in the sling. (It can also carry skis diagonally, or a board vertically, and poles, too.) But this bag is made for hot laps from a chair, helicopter, or snowcat. When they aren't needed, the straps stash clean out of sight.

THE VERDICT: Safety in a tight, streamlined package—and at a great price. 6.2 lbs; k2skis.com

CARRY COMFORT: 3 / **FUNCTION:** 4

Dakine ABS Vario Cover Heli Pro DLX 26L \$120**BEST FOR:** Tricking out your avy-airbag base unit.

THE TEST: Before you get too excited about the price tag, know that this is just the storage part. It zips onto an ABS Vario Base Unit, which is sold separately and includes the airbag system (\$950; abs-airbag.com). Why go with a two-part setup? Because it enables you to change pack size depending on how much you need to take with you. The feature-rich Heli Pro is our favorite Vario-compatible pack, with vertical and horizontal ski- and board-carry options, lots of pockets for keeping organized, and plenty of gear room for most day trips.

THE VERDICT: The best pack in the Vario ecosystem, and a damn fine day-pack on its own. 1.4 lbs (6.6 lbs with base unit attached); dakine.com

CARRY COMFORT: 3 / **FUNCTION:** 4.5

Backcountry Access Float 32 \$550**BEST FOR:** Pack-size versatility.

THE TEST: No matter where we went with the Float 32, it had our back. On a frigid tour in Alberta, there was enough room to bring all our avy essentials, an extra layer, and a thermos of coffee. The two ice-ax holders, diagonal ski-carry setup (vertical for snowboards), and helmet hammock all came in handy when climbing for turns in the Cascades. But testers' favorite feature was the 2.4 inches of vertical torso adjustment in the hipbelt, which allowed for a perfectly dialed fit.

THE VERDICT: A solid day-tripper that holds you close. 5.6 lbs; backcountryaccess.com

CARRY COMFORT: 3.5 / **FUNCTION:** 4.5

The Float (K2 and Backcountry Access) and ABS (Dakine) airbag systems work similarly, but they use **different canister types**. Discharged ABS canisters need to be exchanged at an ABS dealer, while Float canisters can be refilled at most dive shops.



Essentials: GLOVES

| 1



| 2



GET A GRIP

Better mitts equal happier hands

BY DAVE COX

1. Hestra Narvik Wool Terry \$185

Like most of the leather gloves here, the Narvik is made from goatskin, but unlike some of them, it's tanned with plant tannins. Like Flylow, Hestra utilizes a wax coating rather than laminating its fabrics. It's a touch less breathable but still adequately water resistant, provided it's waxed periodically. The removable wool liner is exceptionally fast drying. hestragloves.com

2. Seirus HeatTouch Torche \$395

Seirus upgrades the typical battery-heated glove, adding a poly-fleece liner that slips into a leather-and-soft-shell outer with a heat reflective layer. Choose from three settings: warm, medium, and toasty (the last seriously diminishes battery life). Unlike most heated gloves, the Torche works well when switched off, even without the liner. seirus.com

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**3. Eddie Bauer First Ascent****Guide Trigger** \$179

Mittens are notorious for compromising dexterity, but the pointer finger and notched leather at your knuckles make it easy to grasp ski poles while letting your index finger freelance. Like the Extravert, this one is built with goatskin palms and a nylon shell but also includes a blanket of PrimaLoft batting. eddiebauer.com

4. Flylow Gear Blaster \$99

Other than the cuff, this is completely leather. Between all that hide and the fluted lines along the outsides of the fingers, you've got a glove that wants to wrap around a ski pole like an anaconda around a hog. Credit the warmth to PrimaLoft Gold insulation and the waterproofing to triple-oven-baked leather and a coat of beeswax. flylowgear.com

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**5. Outdoor Research Extravert** \$75

The perfect choice for skin up, ski down mornings. The nylon on the outside of the hand breathes extremely well, while the wool lining wicks away moisture. Goat leather in the palms is durable yet oh so supple. Easy-to-slug Velcro cuffs cozily swaddle the wrists, and the handy nylon loop makes slipping them on a snap. outdoorresearch.com

6. Arc'teryx Lithic \$249

The Lithic eschews leather in the palm for polyurethane patches laminated to Gore-Tex. And while our friends at Arc'teryx may be vegan, they say they do it to improve waterproofness. Leather, they insist, absorbs moisture no matter how diligently you apply a DWR treatment. Add seam-taped Gore-Tex and you've got the driest hands on the hill. arcteryx.com



BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE

Everything you need for snowbound nights
BY MIKE THURBER

1. Western Mountaineering Snojacket parka \$775

This 850-plus-fill down jacket, made from Gore Windstopper, was easily the warmest of the dozen tested. But with quilted stitching along the side panels, we never felt we were trading mobility for coziness. Bonus: the expanded hood creates better peripheral vision. westernmountaineering.com

2. Valandre Odin Neo sleeping bag \$900

The new Odin Neo is 10 percent lighter than last year's but equally capable. With an impressive draft collar, it kept us warm even in the negatives. valandre.com

3. Granite Gear Nimbus Trace Access 85 pack \$370

The Nimbus Trace is bigger (85 liters!)

than ever, but keeps important features like the lightweight yet stiff composite suspension system. Cool feature: the front panel can be peeled away with a rip of Velcro for quick access to extra layers. granitegear.com

4. Sea to Summit Comfort Plus sleeping pad \$200

Sure, this pad has Thermolite insulation, durable face fabric, and a double-valve system that inflates in less than a minute. But we're most excited about the

layered cushioning. A bubble of air along the bottom kept us above the snow, while a pressurized chamber let testers fine-tune the softness. seatosummit.com

5. Ortovox Snow saw \$59

Great for cutting shelter blocks and testing snowpack. Pair with the Kodiak shovel. ortovox.com

6. Sierra Designs Convert 3 tent \$690

This three-person tent shines in winter, with its large removable vestibule, which

kept gear for three adults dry during a snow storm. sierra designs.com

7. Ortovox Kodiak shovel \$89

For moving lots of snow, nothing quite measures up to the Kodiak. A large blade, sticky rubber coating on the shaft, and shovel and hoe digging modes made this the ideal tool for making any test pits. ortovox.com

8. Petzl Tikka headlamp \$30

Petzl updated the Tikka by making the

on-off switch bigger for mitten-friendly use and adding a glow-in-the-dark element, so the tangerine-size light is easy to find at night. petzl.com

9. Snow Peak GeoShield stove \$100

The GeoShield locks into a single-piece unit—windscreen plus stove. But we really like the way the canister connects to the heating element via a hose, so you can optimize gas pressure for subzero temperatures. snowpeak.com



BACK TO BASICS

Playing safe requires good decision-making and a few pieces of simple, reliable gear

BY GRAYSON SCHAFFER

1. Backcountry Access Scepter 7075 Aluminum poles \$80

The Scepter is BCA's classic two-piece adjustable metal pole, with a built-in scraper on top to help you keep your skis, skins, and boot soles clear. Because nothing is worse than dragging ten pounds of caked ice up the hill with you. backcountryaccess.com

2. Black Diamond Free Glide Skin Care wax \$13

Spring skiing means wide temperature swings, which can cause climbing skins to soak up moisture and lose grippiness. To stave off the issue, treat your skins with Black Diamond's Skin Care waterproofing wax the night before. blackdiamondequipment.com

3. Black Diamond Deploy 7 shovel \$75

You owe it to your buddies to carry a serious shovel. This one has a curved aluminum handle that allows it to disappear in your pack. And at just about a pound and a half, you won't even notice it's there until you need it. blackdiamondequipment.com

4. Ortovox 3+ transceiver \$369

A pared-down version of Ortovox's flagship S1+ beacon, the 3+ is geared toward the everyday backcountry skier. Its three antennae give it a range of 131 feet unburied. In search mode, the 3+ quickly locates a buried friend—or friends, with the help of a flagging button that blocks victims' signals once they're found. Directional and distance readouts are as simple as on any beacon out there. ortovox.com

5. Salomon MTN Lab helmet \$200

At a mere 11 ounces, the MTN Lab is a climbing lid with skiing aspirations. It's well vented, comes with a soft liner, and has a lightweight bungee in place of a goggle-retaining strap. salomon.com

6. Black Diamond Ski strap \$6

Sure, this 18-inch-long band does a totally admirable job of holding your skis together. But you can also use it to lash a water bottle to your backpack or prevent a problem skin from separating from your board. blackdiamondequipment.com

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ADVENTURE TESTED

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POWDER PLAYERS

The two best alpine-touring setups of the year
BY LUCY HIGGINS

1. G3 Synapse 101 W skis \$900

A ski this light and uphill oriented tends to get skittish on the downs. Not so the Synapse 101W, which let testers rip in everything from day-old mank to eight inches of fresh. The superb mix of stiffness and playfulness comes from the carbon-wrapped poplar and paulownia core and the early-rise tip and tail. 130/101/118; 5.8 lbs; genuineguidegear.com

2. Fritschi Diamir Vipec 12 bindings \$600

Last year the Vipec 12 made our list of finalists because of its alpine-binding-like toe release and pole-adjustable heel riser. The new version is even better, a result of subtle improvements like boot-toe guides for easy entry. 2.4 lbs; black diamondequipment.com

3. Atomic Century 109 skis \$725

Mount alpine bindings on the Century 109 and you'll be happy charging the resort all season. But the lightweight, carbon-reinforced wood core also makes this a fantastic big-mountain touring ski. With an early-rise tip and slight tail rocker, it's ideal for deep days. 132/109/122; 7.5 lbs; atomic.com

4. Tyrolia Carbon Ambition 12 bindings \$1150

The Ambition 12 is one of the lightest frame bindings on the market, with a stiff carbon tube running between toe and heel. Compatible with downhill and AT boots, it's only a little less capable on fast descents than a true alpine model. Best for those who spend equal time on both sides of the rope. 3.6 lbs; tyrolia.com

5. Tecnica Cochise Pro Light W boots \$660

Meet the AT boot that thinks it's an alpine rig. An updated metal-on-metal walk system gives you more flex and a locked-in ride on the descent. The burly power strap adds even more forward and lateral stiffness. The only downside: it's heavy. 8.5 lbs; tecnicausa.com

6. Scott Sports Celeste II boots \$800

The Celeste II had no problem taming wide planks, with a relatively tall cuff, four burly buckles, and a stiff shell. But it was the walk mode, with 60 degrees of flex, that impressed us most. "It would tear up the dance floor as effectively as the slopes," one tester said. 5.3 lbs; scott-sports.com

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STAR POWER

The winners from our Snowbird, Utah, test
BY OLIVIA DWYER

ALL MOUNTAIN FRONTSIDE

1. Atomic Vantage 90 CTI W \$725

Even frontside devotees detour into trees and bumps. Atomic's answer: a ski that pairs on-piste performance with stellar off-trail capabilities. Camber underfoot is backed by a wood core and vibration-eating metal to ramp up carving power. A top-sheet window reveals woven carbon mesh that runs from tip to tail for torsional strength. Subtle rocker makes for supple turn initiation, while the wide 90-millimeter waist means you'll stay lifted in the fluff. 129/90/112.5; atomic.com

ALL MOUNTAIN POWDER

2. Völkl 100E \$825

This ski excels when storm totals measure in feet. Full rocker and a 108-millimeter waist kept testers atop thigh-deep powder and moving slough. Taper up front cut cleanly through chop and let us feather turns in the trees. Also noteworthy: a raised center ridge channels pressure through the ski for even flex and efficient power transfer. This steps down to a thinner profile at the edges, which reduces mass and saves energy. An ash and poplar core combines for a nimble fat ski, but there's enough edge to handle hard snow. 141/108/124; volkl.com

ALL MOUNTAIN

3. K2 Skis Fulluvit 98Ti \$850

The Fulluvit aces corduroy, but that's only half the story. The new K2 shines off-trail as well. Hold the ski in the sun and you'll see the aspen, paulownia, and bamboo core, engineered to trim thickness and swing weight. Less obvious are the center grooves, which shed more grams. Solid wood at the edges transfers power and grip, while metal absorbs terrain impact. K2 put camber in 70 percent of the ski, then added rocker at the tip and tail and taper to reduce tip deflection for a more forgiving feel. 131/98/119; k2skis.com

4. Rossignol Temptation 100 \$850

The Temptation effortlessly navigates the whole hill. Camber through 70 percent of the ski paired with wood and metal guts delivers a damp, stable ride. On corduroy we drove it through full-throttle GS turns and easily shifted to short-radius arcs. Tip and tail rocker smooths turn transitions and works with the 100-millimeter waist to guarantee float even in boot-deep snow. And because honeycomb tips reduce swing weight, testers praised the Temptation's maneuverability in bumps, narrow tree alleys, and broken chop. 140/100/130; rossignol.com

ZIPPERED UP

Stay warm, dry, and comfortable, no matter the conditions **BY STEPHANIE PEARSON**

1. Showers Pass Rogue Hoodie \$175

Like a highly functional iteration of your favorite sweatshirt, the Rogue bridges the urban-technical divide. A cozy fleece lining is encased in a waterproof-breathable exterior, while commuter-friendly elements like reflective trim, a loop for hanging a light, and a helmet-compatible hood make it ideal for winter bike rides. showerspасс.com

2. Faction Harper Aerogel \$569

The Harper is one of the first jackets to incorporate NASA-developed aerogel, a super-lightweight insulation that's a fraction of the thickness of its synthetic competitors. It's also bafflingly warm. With 100 percent seam-sealed everything, a powder skirt, and five exterior zip pockets, this is the shell to wear when you'll be on the mountain all day, in the nastiest conditions. factionskis.com

3. Ternua South River \$675

Parkas keep you toasty in arctic temperatures, but some are so heavy that they feel like straitjackets. Spanish company Ternua created this relatively lightweight option with a 700-fill down interior made from recycled bedding products and a recycled Gore-Tex shell to keep hail and sleet at bay. ternua.com

4. Eddie Bauer First Ascent Downlight Stormdown Hooded \$249

This windproof shell is made from 50 percent recycled ripstop polyester, with a durable water-repellent finish and 800-fill moisture-resistant down stuffing. It's also exceptionally compressible—great for carrying in a backpack when wet, windy, fickle weather is on the horizon. eddiebauer.com

5. Volcom Act \$170

This insulated snowboard jacket is a chairlift stopper. How could it not be, with that giant snow owl printed across the front, designed by British Columbia-based artist and snowboarder Vanessa Stark? Best of all, a portion of the totally reasonable price goes directly to Boarding for Breast Cancer. volcom.com

6. Dynafit Chugach \$400

Say hello to a hybrid soft shell that does its job so well, you'll hardly notice you're wearing it. The shoulders, chest, upper arms, and hood are all cut from windproof Windstopper, while the lower half is built from a highly breathable, DWR-finished woven fabric. We were as comfortable skinning up as skiing down with this athletic-fitting piece. dynafit.com



**KILLER
VALUE**

6



STACKED DECKS

Boards that play nice everywhere
BY ADAM BRODERICK

BEST FOR: Deep Carves

1. Gnu Zoid \$650

The asymmetric Zoid comes in two shapes: one for regular footers and one for goofy. Testers agreed it was a joy to ride almost anywhere. "It's medium stiff lengthwise and charges through corn, bumps, and groomers," one noted. The serrated Magne-Traction edges provide solid hold on ice, and the surf-inspired Ekstrom tail "feels like pumping a wave but carves incredibly well," our tester said. gnu.com

RESPONSE: 4 / VERSATILITY: 3

BEST FOR: Going Bigger

2. Head Hope \$429

The Hope is a twin-directional board with superior flex. A solid, stable feel on landings gave even less-aggressive riders the confidence to launch airs. Flat camber between the feet combined with a soft waist increases response time, while regular camber underfoot locks in the edges when going fast. Made from a light, stiff, tough graphene. ridehead.com

RESPONSE: 4 / VERSATILITY: 4

BEST FOR: Doing It All

3. Never Summer Aura \$500

Whether you spend most of your time at the park or lapping groomers, the light, playful Aura can hang. The flex is just right, offering the perfect balance of responsiveness, stability, and pop. "Quick to turn, with great edge hold," one impressed tester said. Extra camber under the feet gives it that superior control and adds liveliness, while rocker in between helps it float through the deepest snow. neversummer.com

RESPONSE: 4 / VERSATILITY: 5

BEST FOR: All-Mountain Freestyle

4. Amplid LoveLife \$460

Riders gushed over this responsive board. With camber underneath your boots and rocker at the tip and tail, the LoveLife snaps through sharp turns on icy hard-pack and holds its own in fresh powder. Amplid used basalt stringers throughout, which calm vibrations when you're cutting through crud. Result: a ride that's dynamic and forgiving yet stable. "Light and damp enough to absorb chatter," one tester said. amplid.com

RESPONSE: 5 / VERSATILITY: 4

FIRESIDE CHIC

Everything you need to stand out

BY MEAGHEN BROWN

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1. Woolrich Giant Buffalo Wool coat \$350

Lumberjack shirts are the de facto uniform of mountain-town dudes. Woolrich gives the look an urban upgrade for women with its Giant Buffalo coat, made from a wool-nylon blend to keep you warm on the streets Vail at night. woolrich.com

5. Stumptown Journeyman Brew kit \$120

Hot coffee: the tonic that keeps our engines revved during winter's darkest days. The eight-piece Journeyman kit includes a hand-crank grinder, a kettle, a mug, and beans to provide on-demand caffeination when we're on the road. stumptowncoffee.com

2. United by Blue Murray Plaid dress \$98

We like flannel for its unbeatable next-to-skin feel, and we like dresses for their versatility. Combine the two and you have the ideal post-ski kit. Bonus: the Philadelphia-based brand uses a portion of its proceeds to organize water-cleanup efforts. unitedbyblue.com

6. Poler Worker Man beanie \$22

Sure, this waffle-weave cap will keep your head warm and your helmet-hair covered. But it's on this page because it's handmade in the U.S. and available in 26 awesome colors. polerstuff.com

7. Industry of All Nations Alpaca Cabin socks \$65

The wool in these cozy, undyed socks comes from alpacas raised by Bolivian farmers, who send the fleece to locals near La Paz to be knit into the final product. Perfect for lounging at the lodge after a day on the hill. industryofallnations.com

3. Tucker and Bloom Ranger Market tote \$175

Before technical fabric became a thing, waxed canvas reigned as king of weatherproofness. This bag—made in Nashville, Tennessee, by a father-son duo—uses 18-ounce Missouri canvas with Kentucky leather trim. tucker-bloom.com

4. Kit and Ace Queen Street scarf \$118

There's nothing particularly high-performance about this prep-school-style cashmere scarf, but we don't care: it's beautiful and soft. And that's all you need to know. kitandace.com

8. Bogs Plimsoll Prince of Wales boots \$140

When temperatures drop below zero, we break out this boot, rated to minus 40 degrees. With seven millimeters of insulation, a rubber upper, and a stink-fighting footbed, it's good for shoveling snow in the morning and heading to the pub at night. bogsfootwear.com

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WORK HARD, PLAY HARD

Look good while you train

BY MEAGHEN BROWN



1. The North Face Dyvinity jacket \$160

Finding the perfect winter training layer is tough: too heavy and you'll overheat, too light and you'll freeze. The Dyvinity nails the middle ground. Soft-shell material in the body and hood blocks wind, while knit fabric in the sleeves and along the sides allows for mobility. thenorthface.com

2. Terramar ATP Crew Hiker socks \$17 for two pairs

Mesh vent panels and Terramar's polyester-Lycra-blend fabric let us run in these socks in temperatures from about 10 to above 50 degrees. terramarports.com

3. Outdoor Voices Catch-Me-If-You-Can hoodie \$85

This poly-spandex throw-on may be the most comfortable item in our closet. We put it on for morning runs and gym sessions, and then, because it's so soft and the yoga-studio-cool styling let us get away with it, wore it to the office. outdoorvoices.com

4. Black Diamond Wingate tank \$49

The ribbed body looks a bit like your old-school gym uniform, but the flat-seam construction and nylon fabric make it a true high-performance piece. blackdiamondequipment.com

5. Vimmia X Excellence leggings \$168

Vimmia's latest offering may be the best pair of leggings we've ever tested. Though the styling is nice, it's the temperature-regulating compression-weave yarn and four-way stretch that have us reaching for them constantly. vimmia.com

6. Skida Nordic headband \$16

Skida hand-makes all its headgear in Vermont, and though it targets nordic skiers, the bright poly-blend fabric is great for just about any cold-weather activity. The wide band fits comfortably under a helmet and keeps ears warm while also blocking sweat drip. shopskida.com

7. Craft Hybrid Weather gloves \$35

Gloves or mittens—why choose? Craft incorporated both into these wind- and waterproof hand protectors. Flip the mitten cover up when the weather turns sour or tuck it inside as the day warms up. craftsports.com

8. Dahlgren Twinkle Toes socks \$25

These knee-high, moisture-wicking, alpaca wool socks are overkill for running. But if you're ski touring or ice skating (hey, it's fun!), they're just about perfect, with absolutely zero itch. dahlgrenfootwear.com

9. Crane and Lion Keyhole sports bra \$60

Supportive yet stylish: that's really all we ask of a sports bra, and the nylon-spandex Keyhole delivers. The back cutout also allows for better airflow. craneandlion.com

DO-IT-ALL KICKS

On turf or tarmac, these are our favorite women's trainers of the season

BY JUSTIN NYBERG

TRAIL

1. Saucony Nomad TR \$110

The standout feature of this flexible road-trail hybrid is the array of low, coffin-shaped lugs on the outsole, which roll smoothly on pavement or packed earth. Supple and smooth, the Nomad felt most at home on drier surfaces but was secure in most conditions despite the roomy last. 8.1 oz; 4 mm drop; saucony.com

2. Icebug Zeal OLX \$185

Sixteen steel studs in the sticky, mud-shucking rubber outsole of the nimble Zeal OLX made easy work of packed winter roads and sketchy trails, and the water-resistant upper kept things nice and dry in slush. The stiffer fit felt best with a thick winter sock, and the low, fast ride kept us moving even in the muck. 8.5 oz; 6 mm drop; icebug.com

3. Salomon Speedcross Pro \$150

If you like to move fast in technical terrain, the Speedcross Pro is your shoe. Its aggressive six-millimeter lugs are made for slick trails and packed snow. And with a narrow last, locked-in fit, and substantial but responsive midsole, it drew high marks for precision over hazardous ground. 9.7 oz; 10 mm drop; salomon.com

ROAD

4. Pearl Izumi EMotion Road N3 \$130

Think fatty light. The N3 is a thick, wide, max-cushioned trainer that doesn't feel as awkward or energy sapping as some chubby shoes. The rockered ride is buttery, forgiving, and plush, but also a touch firmer and more responsive than you'd expect. Best for recovery runs and mellow cruises. 10.2 oz; 4 mm drop; pearlizumi.com

5. ASICS Gel-Quantum 360 \$170

The midsole of the new Gel-Quantum 360 is encircled entirely in ASICS's gel cushioning, giving these high-mileage shoes a deep, gummy feel without the typical pile of foam. We loved the responsiveness, though we could certainly feel the extra weight and sluggishness. 9.9 oz; 10 mm drop; asicsamerica.com

6. Under Armour Charged Bandit \$100

The new Charged Bandit is exhibit A that Under Armour's running shoes are coming into their own. Light and energetic, it's comfortable without sacrificing speed. We liked the secure fit, although the heel is a bit roomy, and appreciated the mild slant of the midsole and subdued medial post on longer runs. Bonus: 360-degree reflectivity for maximum visibility after sundown. 8.6 oz; 10 mm drop; underarmour.com



Gear Giveaway



ADIDAS
Terrex Dawn Wall Hoodie
+ a Kevin Jorgeson Signed Poster

One women's and one men's jacket to be awarded along with a signed poster with each jacket. Available in Vivid Yellow or Black.

adidasoutdoor.com



AHNU® Twain Harte

This waterproof, insulated winter boot blends fashion and function for the ultimate apres ski boot.

ahnu.com



ALTRA Lone Peak NeoShell®

2 pair to giveaway (1 men's & 1 women's)
The better-than-waterproof solution to running in rugged terrain and unpredictable weather.

altrarunning.com



ARC'TERYX Lithic Gloves

Insulated, highly durable, hydrophobic GORE-TEX® backcountry ski and snowboard glove with exceptional grip and dexterity.

arcteryx.com



BENCHMADE 477-1 Emissary

A stylish knife with the strongest, most versatile locking mechanism on the market.

Benchmade.com



BLACK DIAMOND Mission Shell

A fully featured, do-it-all ski jacket featuring waterproof and breathable GORE-TEX® fabric, the wide-ranging Mission Shell has the mobility, protection and comfort needed for any day of the season, in- or out-of-bounds.

blackdiamondequipment.com



BOGS Men's Johnny

The perfect style for surviving the elements with Rebound cushioning and waterproof leather.

bogsfootwear.com



BOLLE

Millenium Helmet The new Bollé Millenium has been imagined as the only all-mountain helmet you'll need.

Bollé Virtuose Goggle Virtuoso offers one of the widest fields-of-view with its 1-Click changeable lenses and fog-free clarity.

527 Sunglasses Based on the original Bollé 527, this style has returned with modern technological updates.

bolle.com



BROOKS Ghost 8

The neutral running shoe provides the right amount of soft cushioning for super-smooth runs.

brooksrunning.com



CW-X Men and Women Endurance Pro Tights

Endurance Pro Tights feature CW-X's patented Support Web engineered to reduce fatigue and increase power.

cw-x.com



DRAGON X1 - Verse Transitions™ Goggle

The X1 goggle features an instantly adaptive Transitions™ lens, our patented frameless technology and triple layer micro-fleece face foam to provide you with comfortable, optically perfect vision all day long."

dragonalliance.com



EDDIE BAUER First Ascent Ignitelite Flux 60 Hooded Jacket

Designed for dependable warmth during stop and go activity in cold conditions, enabling you to change layers less often.

eddiebauer.com



FJALLRAVEN Greenland No. 1 Down Jacket

Timeless down jacket in G-1000 Eco with contrasting colors and leather details. Fixed hood, chest and hand pockets and an inside pocket.

fjallraven.us



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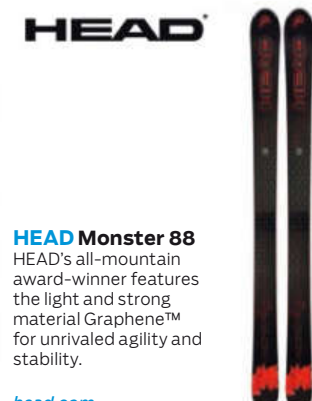
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HESTRA

HESTRA
Narvik Wool Terry Glove

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hestragloves.com



HOKA ONE ONE Clifton 2

The Clifton 2 offers runners of all types great cushioning at a very light weight.

hokaoneone.com



KEEN Liberty Ridge

The uncompromising pinnacle of KEEN's American Built Performance Series. Assembled with pride in Portland, Oregon, using the finest materials from around the world.

keenfootwear.com



LUMINOX
Navy SEAL Colormark Watch

Navy SEAL Colormark 3063.LM with Luminox self-powered illumination 20ATM Swiss Made.

luminox.com



MOUNTAIN HARDWEAR
Ghost Whisperer™ Down Jacket

The world's lightest full-featured down jacket. Incredible versatile for layering, it packs down smaller than a softball.

mountainhardwear.com



OGIO Ascent Backpack

Built for Active Outdoor Lifestyles—features high strength lightweight materials with unparalleled comfort and protection.

ogio.com



OUTDOOR RESEARCH
Uberlayer Hooded Jacket

The incredibly breathable, Polartec Alpha-insulated, Outside Gear of the Year award-winning loft layer.

outdoorresearch.com



QALO Outdoors Collection

5 QALO Outdoors Collection Silicone Wedding Rings: The Functional Wedding Band For Your Outdoors Lifestyle

qalo.com



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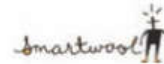
rossignol.com



SALOMON MTN LAB

The new freeride-touring benchmark combines ultra-light shell technology, superior range-of-motion, and the no compromise power and precision to take your skiing further.

mtn.salomon.com



SMARTWOOL
Men's Corbet 120 Jacket

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smartwool.com



SMITH
Lowdown with ChromaPop

The Lowdown pairs bold style with a lightweight frame and ChromaPop lens for enhanced color and clarity.

smithoptics.com



MERRELL Capra Waterproof
with VIBRAM Megagrip

Winterized extremely lightweight hiker made with a Vibram Megagrip outsole to take on any terrain.

us.vibram.com



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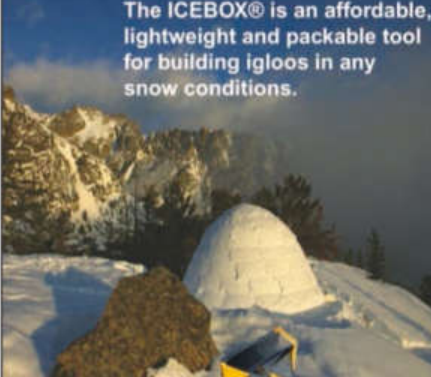


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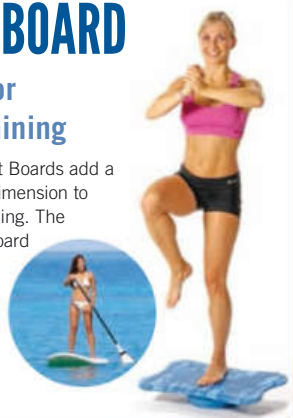
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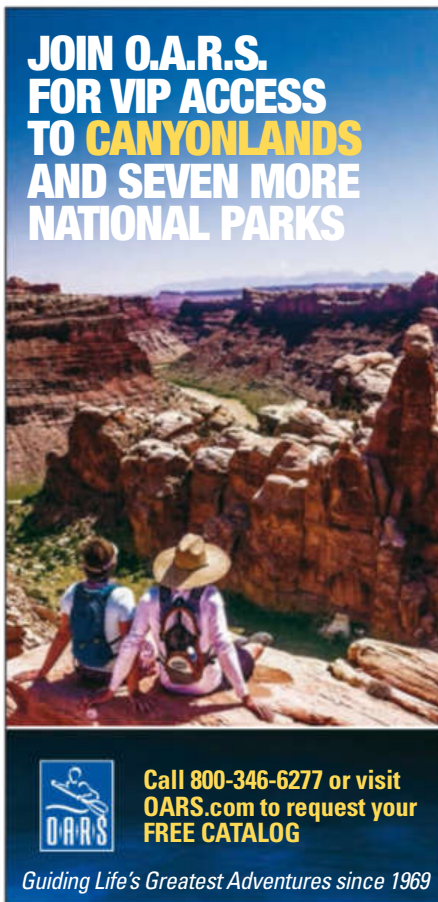
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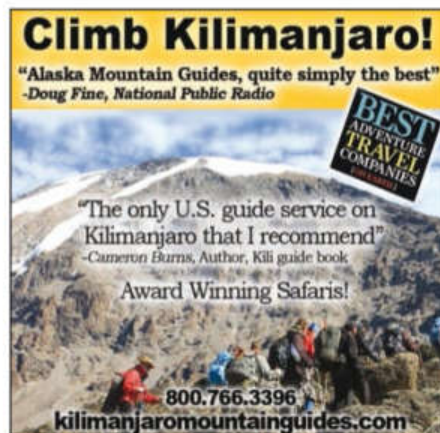
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